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C O U C H

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## PREFACE

I AM glad to see these poems of mine put together in a handy volume: since, apart from the personal desire to leave a small monument, I know that some of the numbers included have had even the Horatian good fortune to chime in men's hearts through sentry-duty in distant lands. The silent thanks of these solitary ones is the best reward I wish for in my lifetime.

Still, re-reading these numbers, I have a hope that some of them will outlast me.

Q.

THE HAVEN, FOWEY, CORNWALL,

*June 1929.*

## CONTENTS

PROLOGUE. Upon New Year's Eve	1
Sabina	3
Doom Ferry	7
A Housekeeping	9
The White Moth	13
Shadows	15
The Masquer in the Street	16
Dolor Oogo	19
Ode upon Eckington Bridge, River Avon	22
The Planted Heel	24
The Soldier (Roumanian)	27
Jezebel	29
The Statues and the Tear	31
The Splendid Spur	33
Alma Mater	34
To Maurice Hewlett	37
To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets	39
Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse	43
The Least of These	50
To Bearers	51
The Root	52
Jenifer's Love	53
Cottage Musk	54
Premonition	55
<u>Love Sequestered</u>	56





POEMS BY  
SIR ARTHUR  
QUILLER-  
COUCH



## Contents

To a Mother, on seeing her Smile Repeated in her Daughter's Eyes . . . . .	57
Exmoor Verses:	
I. Vashti's Song . . . . .	59
II. Saturn . . . . .	59
III. Dereliction . . . . .	60
The Gentle Savage . . . . .	61
The Comrade . . . . .	63
The Captain . . . . .	67
Chant Royal of High Virtue . . . . .	68
Three Men of Truro:	
I. E. W. B. . . . .	71
II. A. B. D. . . . .	73
III. C. W. S. . . . .	74
Victoria . . . . .	76
Coronation Hymn . . . . .	79
Via Sacra . . . . .	81
Sonnet—Isles of Scilly . . . . .	84
Sonnet—Hesperus . . . . .	85
Christmas Eve . . . . .	86
Child's Carol . . . . .	88
Carol . . . . .	90
Holy Innocents . . . . .	92
SONGS	
Nuptial Night . . . . .	95
Helford River . . . . .	96
The Kerchief . . . . .	98
'To the Land where ye go . . .'	99

## *Contents*

A Fiddler's Valentine	.	.	.	.	.	.	100
Mary Leslie	.	.	.	.	.	.	101
The Lamp and the Guitar	.	.	.	.	.	.	103
The Marine (Poitevin)	.	.	.	.	.	.	104
Ia's Song	.	.	.	.	.	.	107
Manaton	.	.	.	.	.	.	108
Two Duets	.	.	.	.	.	.	109
LONGER POEMS							
Columbus at Seville	.	.	.	.	.	.	112
The Regent: A Drama	.	.	.	.	.	.	130
TRANSLATIONS							
The Vigil of Venus	.	.	.	.	.	.	164
Hesiod's Winter	.	.	.	.	.	.	182
The Homeric Hymn to the Delian Apollo	.	.	.	.	.	.	186

## UPON NEW YEAR'S EVE

**N**ow winds of winter glue  
Their tears upon the thorn,  
And earth has voices few,  
And those forlorn.

And 'tis our solemn night  
When maidens sand the porch,  
And play at *Jack's Alight*  
With burning torch,

Or cards, or *Kiss i' the Ring*—  
While ashen fagots blaze,  
And late wassailers sing  
In miry ways.

Then, dear my wife, be blithe  
To bid the New Year hail,  
And welcome—plough, drill, scythe,  
And jolly flail.

For though the snows he'll shake  
Of winter from his head,  
To settle, flake by flake,  
On ours instead;

## *Upon New Year's Eve*

Yet we be wreathèd green  
    Beyond his blight or chill,  
Who kissed at seventeen,  
    And worship still.

We know not what he'll bring:  
    But this we know to-night—  
He doth prepare the Spring  
    For our delight.

With birds he'll comfort us,  
    With blossoms, balms, and bees,  
With brooks, and odorous  
    Wild breath o' the breeze.

Come then, O festal prime!  
    With sweets thy bosom fill,  
And dance it, dripping thyme,  
    On Lantick hill.

West wind, awake! and comb  
    Our garden, blade from blade—  
We, in our little home,  
    Sit unafraid.

## SABINA

THE stair was steep; the Tower was tall;  
Sabina's strength was gone:  
She leaned a hand against the wall,  
And let her boy run on.

High in the blue the Old Tower swayed  
His bells to the sunset breeze:  
But ever like hemlock climbed the shade  
Of earth on his earth-hewn knees.

The Widow watched the red sun's glow  
Steal up by the window's edge;  
She saw the darkened green below,  
And the wan sheep by the hedge.

'Child! Child!' she called, and 'Wait for me!'  
But ever the boy's feet ran;  
And up through the Whisp'ring Gallery  
Came the voice of her dead man—

'He will not turn for any prayer,  
Nor pause for any tear:  
The winds of God harp down the stair,  
Their pinnacle notes ring clear.'

## *Sabina*

She said, 'My pulse runs low and low:  
    He has leapt inside of me.  
Blood of my blood, shall he not know  
    My blood's necessity?'

The dead man said, 'He will not wait.  
    High in a naked room  
A maiden listens, strong as fate,  
    And selfish as the tomb.

'Her sisters, as they cross the floor,  
    Throw glances at the clock:  
Her father fumbles with the door,  
    He knows he may not lock:  
  
'Her mother pins the bridal crown,  
    And pricks her trembling thumbs:  
But the bride has laid her mirror down,  
    Her small foot drums and drums.

'A minute—hark! Ah joy, ah joy!  
    The helpless door falls wide,  
The harp of God and the laugh of a boy  
    Sing aubade to the bride!

'The bride she rises from her chair—  
    Now never stretch your hands!  
The harp, the voice, the climbing stair—  
    Naught else she understands.

*Sabina*

‘Follow the harp, take hands and run !

    High on the shining leads,  
Or ever a midsummer night’s begun  
The swallow twitters her orison  
    By the granite martyrs’ heads !’

‘Dead man, we too have kissed and climbed.

    Inert you moulder there,  
And here I fail and flutter, limed  
    Fast on the middle stair.

‘Sure as upon the still-drawn east

    The evening arch invades ;  
Sure as we hold a green earth leased  
    Briefly between two shades ;

‘They will not reach—’

    ‘But they will run,  
    And hand in hand admire  
Through loftier panes an ampler sun,  
    List a diviner choir :

‘Farther horizons, widening slopes—

    Yet not a blossom there  
But gat its increase from the hopes  
    We two were used to share !

### *Sabina*

‘Woman, consign you with the years;  
Consign and follow me.  
What though the sun shine on our tears,  
If *he* the rainbow see?’

The stair was steep; the Tower was tall;  
Sabina’s strength was gone:  
She bowed her face unto the wall,  
And let her boy run on.

## DOOM FERRY

**B**OATMAN, have they crossed? 'Not all:  
The inn, there, hath an upper chamber,  
And a window in the wall  
Where the small white roses clamber.

'Many shelves run round the room;  
On a shelf, and no man near them,  
Two are talking low i' the gloom—  
From the trellis' foot may'st hear them.'

Who are they? 'At dawn they came  
By the Passage, calling *Over!*  
She the corpse of a comely dame,  
And the man, methinks, her lover.'

Boatman, land and climb the stair:  
By the scented window-boxes  
Lower me that loving pair  
Here among the crimson phloxes.

Boatman, is this honey-dew  
Dripping from the window-boxes?  
Nay, I cannot tell its hue  
Here against the crimson phloxes.

## *Doom Ferry*

Take a guinea and a groat:  
One in ale shall keep thee merry;  
Let the other fee the boat  
Tiding these across the ferry.

Take this purse: it shall persuade  
Him who digs i' th' acre yonder  
Them to bed with a cunning spade  
Cheek by jowl, no turtles fonder.—

Cheek by jowl, and heart by heart,  
But a thought in either buried,  
That shall push them wide apart—  
Wide enough ere a third be ferried.

So, between, my body I'll thrust,  
Laughing, straightening out my knees there,  
Either hand in a little dust  
Dabbling, at my cool dead ease there.

## A HOUSEKEEPING

**S**URPRISED by young desire, as by the dawn,  
A young Orion, wildered, half awake,  
Bedraggled, drenched in woodland ways withdrawn,  
My heart, a-tiptoe by a dewy brake,  
Spied the gods sleeping—vision of green lawn,  
Pale ivory limbs, pillows of dappled fawn,  
And a great quiet, and a stilly lake.

There the long grasses topped a banquet spread  
—For that the turf had been their only table—  
With cates and fruit and delicate white bread,  
Roses a-float in craters carved with fable.  
There droop'd a wreath from each relaxèd head,  
And there on garland and on god were shed  
The coverlet of years innumerable.

They perish not, beneath the secular oak—  
Olympian Jove and all his greenwood train:  
And yet no breath heaves any purple cloak;  
Yet the thin leaves list at their lips in vain;  
In vain the veils of morning, like a smoke,  
Shake with the spiral lark. Be whist, invoke—  
They perish not, yet cannot live again.

Anon upon that lake a shudder swept,  
And therewithal a feeble childish wail;  
And lo! a naked wingèd babe that stepped

### *A Housekeeping*

Shoreward atween the weed and galingale,  
And sought the whitest queen of all, and crept  
Close to her side, and clapped her cheek, and wept,  
And coaxed her ear with many an elfin tale.

‘Mother, awake! The Western Wind arrives!  
Down the long gulf he breaks a wavering stair  
For Phœbus’ gilded feet, and shoreward drives,  
And sings across the meadows, debonair,  
Pelting the Heaven with dust of golden hives,  
Blown saffron bloom, and small birds with their  
wives,  
And happiness in handfuls everywhere.

‘Late as I couched high on the Latmian cliff,  
I heard the red pine whisper wakefully;  
I saw the pasturing brood-mare pause and sniff  
The salt newcomer; and with mainsail free  
A helmsman hailed me from his bobbing skiff—  
“Praise the West Wind!” How shall I praise  
him, if,  
If, Cytherea, he awake not thee?

‘He may adorn the day; but ah! the dark—  
The dark destroys me! When the shepherds fold  
And hie them, each to his confederate spark,  
His window lit, his beacon on the wold,

## *A Housekeeping*

Then lie they warm. But me the house-dog's bark  
Drives houseless, quaking through the midnight  
park:

All creatures love, but Love himself's a-cold!

Thereat I stepped and gently him bespake—

‘Dear child, my cottage hath an empty room,  
A flask of thin wine and an oaten cake.

She, an she wake, will thank me—She, for whom  
Kings left their loves, them blithely to betake  
To war, the while that for her lovely sake  
Wild War himself laid by his lance and plume.’

Then first he started back a little space;

But after came and laid a hand in mine,  
As glad of one that spake his mother's praise.

So forth we fared: and happy our design,  
Till *thou* cam'st fluttering through the forest ways,  
Thou, with the woodland sunburn on thy face,  
Thou, in green kirtle pinned with eglantine.

Hillo! criedst thou, ‘what darling leadest there?’

Come, pretty chuck!—and heaped him kiss on kiss.  
An orphan? Save thee from thy mannish care!

Fond foundling, say, what do men know of this?’

‘But he is mine,’ said I; ‘unless thou share—’  
‘If thou,’ she falter'd, ‘hast but room to spare—’  
Fool, fool, fool heart! sub-letting so thy bliss!

### *A Housekeeping*

Thenceforward for a month, as shines in Lent  
    The mead with daffodils, my cottage shone  
With days and nights-made-noonday, being spent  
    In serving him that first had made us one.  
    And then, as droop in April's discontent  
    Those daffodils, thy will declined, and went  
        Forth from my door, leaving us twain alone.

Ah, had we never met—or, having met,  
    Had I been wiser or thy heart less wild!  
For, wanting thee, at first he 'gan to fret,  
    And then to hunger as a weaning child:  
        And perished, wanting thee. And yet—and yet—  
        Hadst thou but turned or showed the least regret,  
        How had he waked, and stretched his arms, and  
            smiled!

## THE WHITE MOTH

*If a leaf rustled, she would start:  
And yet she died a year ago.  
How had so frail a thing the heart  
To journey where she trembled so?  
And do they turn and turn in fright,  
Those little feet, in so much night?*

The light above the poet's head  
Streamed on the page and on the cloth,  
And twice and thrice there buffeted  
On the black pane a white-winged moth:  
'Twas Annie's soul that beat outside  
And 'Open! open! open!' cried:  
'I could not find the way to God:  
There were too many flaming suns  
For signposts, and the fearful road  
Led over wastes where millions  
Of tangled comets hissed and burned—  
I was bewildered, and I turned.  
'Oh, it was easy then! I knew  
Your window and no star beside.  
Look up, and take me back to you!'  
—He rose and thrust the window wide.  
'Twas but because his head was hot  
With rhyming: for he heard her not.

## *The White Moth*

But poets polishing a phrase  
    Lose temper over trivial things;  
And as she blundered in the blaze  
    Toward him, on ecstatic wings,  
He raised a hand and smote her dead;  
    Then wrote, '*That I had died instead!*'

## SHADOWS

**A**s I walked out on Hallows' E'en,  
I saw the moon swing thin and green;  
I saw beside, in Fiddler's Wynd,  
Two hands that moved upon a blind.

As I walked out on Martin's Feast,  
I heard a woman say to a priest—  
'His grave is digged, his shroud is sewn;  
And the child shall pass for his very own.'

But whiles they stood beside his tomb,  
I heard the babe laugh out in her womb—  
'My hair will be black as his was red,  
And I have a mole where his heart bled.'

## THE MASQUER IN THE STREET

**M**ASQUER on the rainy stones,  
Jigging, twirling 'neath the rain,  
Wherfore shake thine agèd bones  
To that antique strain?

Limp thy locks and lank and thinned,  
Thy grey beard it floats a yard;  
And thy coat tails flap i' the wind  
Like a torn placard.

‘Hush!’ saith he; ‘there was a House—  
From its porch the cressets flared;  
Lads in livery called “Carouse!  
For thy lust’s prepared!”

‘Like a snake the prelude wound—  
Crash! the merry waltz began:  
One unto my mind I found,  
And our feet ran.

‘Rubies ripped from altar-cloths  
Leered adown her silk attire;  
Her mad shoes were scarlet moths  
In a rose of fire.

*The Masquer in the Street*

‘Tropic scents her tresses weaved—  
    Scents to lay the soul a-swoon;  
On her breast the draperies heaved  
    Like clouds by the moon.

‘Back she bent her throat, her wet  
    Southern lips, and dared, and dared—  
Over them my kisses met,  
    While the Sax-horn blared.

‘Crash! the brassy cymbal smote—  
    When I would have stayed our feet,  
Laughter rippled all her throat  
    Like a wind on wheat.

‘Every laugh it left a crease,  
    Every ripple wrote her old—  
Yet her arms would not release,  
    Nor her feet with-hold.

‘Ah! to watch it suck and sag—  
    Rosy flesh ’had breathed so warm—  
Till I twirled a loveless hag  
    On a tortured arm!

‘Dancers, resting for a while  
    Down the wall with faces white,  
Watched us waltzing, mile on mile,  
    In a horror of light! . . .

*The Masquer in the Street*

Masquer on the rainy stones,  
What is that thy fingers fold?  
'Dead or dying, naught atones  
But I dance and hold.

'Crash! the maddened cymbal smote—  
Are they minutes? Are they years,  
That I hold but dust to my coat  
And a few gold hairs?'

Masquer in the rainy close,  
God thee pity and thy bone!  
Other men have danced with those,  
And now dance alone.

## DOLOR OOGO

**T**HIRTEEN men by Ruan Shore,  
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—  
Drownèd men since 'eighty-four,  
Down in Dolor Oogo:  
On the cliff against the sky,  
Ailsa, wife of Malachi—  
That cold woman—  
Sits and knits eternally.

By her silent husband's side  
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—  
Stretched awake, she hears the tide  
Moan in Dolor Oogo:  
Till athwart the easter gale  
Hark! the merry dead men hail—  
‘Thou cold woman,  
Take the lantern from the nail!’

Rising in her chilly sark  
—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—  
Forth she fares by Behan Parc,  
Out to Dolor Oogo:  
Kneeling there above the brink,  
Lets her long red tresses sink  
—That cold woman—  
For the sailor-men to drink.

### *Dolor Oogo*

Then the sailor men beneath

—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—

Take the ends between their teeth,

Deep in Dolor Oogo.

‘Lusty blood is this to quaff:

(So the merry dead men laugh)

O, cold woman,

Hath thy man as good by half?’

‘Drownèd men by Ruan Shore

—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—

Lost aboard the *Elsinore*

Down by Dolor Oogo—

If the gulls behind the share

Yesterday had called “Beware,

Thy cold woman!”

Paler now had been my hair.

‘Socks I knit you each a pair

—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—

Half of yarn and half of hair,

Over Dolor Oogo.’

‘Dripping, dripping on the tide,

What red dye thy hair hath dyed,

Thou cold woman?’

‘It hath brushed upon his side.’

*Dolor Oogo*

Knitting with her double thread

—Dolor Oogo, Dolor Oogo—

Half of black and half of red—

Over Dolor Oogo,

On the cliff against the sky,

Ailsa, wife of Malachi,

That cold woman,

Wipes her hands incessantly.

## ODE

UPON ECKINGTON BRIDGE, RIVER AVON

### I

O PASTORAL heart of England! like a psalm  
Of green days telling with a quiet beat—  
O wave into the sunset flowing calm!  
    O tirèd lark descending on the wheat!  
Lies it all peace beyond that western fold  
    Where now the lingering shepherd sees his star  
Rise upon Malvern? Paints an Age of Gold  
    Yon cloud with prophecies of linkèd ease—  
    Lulling this Land, with hills drawn up like knees,  
    To drowse beside her implements of war?

### II

Man shall outlast his battles. They have swept  
    Avon from Naseby Field to Severn Ham;  
And Evesham's dedicated stones have stepped  
    Down to the dust with Montfort's oriflamme.  
Nor the red tear nor the reflected tower  
    Abides; but yet these eloquent grooves remain  
Worn in the sandstone parapet hour by hour  
    By labouring bargemen where they shifted ropes.  
    E'en so shall man turn back from violent hopes  
To Adam's cheer, and toil with spade again.

*Ode upon Eckington Bridge, River Avon*

III

Ay, and his mother Nature, to whose lap  
Like a repentant child at length he hies,  
Not in the whirlwind or the thunder-clap  
Proclaims her more tremendous mysteries:  
But when in winter's grave, bereft of light,  
With still, small voice divinelier whispering  
—Lifting the green head of the aconite,  
Feeding with sap of hope the hazel-shoot—  
She feels God's finger active at the root,  
Turns in her sleep, and murmurs of the Spring.

## THE PLANTED HEEL

**B**y Talland Church as I did go,  
I passed my kindred all in a row;

Straight and silent there by the spade  
Each in his narrow chamber laid.

While I passed, each kinsman's clay  
Stole some virtue of mine away:

Till my shoes on the muddy road  
Left not a print, so light they trod.

Back I went to the Bearers' Lane,  
Begged the dead for my own again.

Answered the eldest one of my line—  
'Thy heart was no one's heart but mine.'

The second claimed my working skill,  
The third my wit, the fourth my will:

The fifth one said, 'Thy feet I gave;  
But want no fleetness here in the grave.'

'For feet a man need have no care,  
If they no weight of his own may bear.

'If I own naught by separate birth,  
What binds my heel e'en now to the earth?'

### *The Planted Heel*

The dead together answered back—

‘Naught but the wealth in thy knapsack.’

‘Nay, then,’ said I, ‘that’s quick to unload’:

And strewed my few pence out on the road.

‘O kinsmen, now be quick, resume

Each rag of me to its rightful tomb!’

The dead were silent then for a space.

Still I stood upright in my place.

Said one, ‘Some strength he will yet conceal.

‘Belike ’tis pride of a planted heel?’

‘Man has but one perduring pride:

Of knowledge alone he is justified.

‘Lie down, lie down by us in the sod:

Thou shalt be wise in the ways of God.’

‘Nay, so I stand upright in the dust,

I’ll take God’s purposes all on trust.

‘An inch of heel for a yard of spine,—

So give me again the goods that are mine!’

I planted my heel by their headstones,

And wrestled an hour with my kinsmen’s bones.

I shook their dust thrice into a sieve,

And gathered all that they had to give.

### *The Planted Heel*

I winnowed knowledge out of the heap:  
'Take it,' I said, 'to warm your sleep.'

I cast their knowledge back on the sod,  
And went on my journey, praising God.

Of all their knowledge I thought me rid:  
But one little grain in my pack had hid.—

Now, as I go, myself I tell,  
'On a planted heel man wrestles well.'

But that little grain keeps whispering me—  
'Better, perhaps, on a planted knee.'

## THE SOLDIER

(ROUMANIAN)

**W**HEN winter trees bestrew the path,  
Still to the twig a leaf or twain  
Will cling and weep, not Winter's wrath,  
But that foreknown, forlorner pain—  
To fall when green leaves come again!

I watch'd him sleep by the furrow—  
The first that fell in the fight.  
His grave they would dig to-morrow:  
The battle called them to-night.

They bore him aside to the trees, there,  
By his undigg'd grave content  
To lie on his shoulders at ease there,  
And hark how the battle went.

The battle went by the village,  
And back through the night were borne  
Far cries of murder and pillage,  
With smoke from the standing corn.

But when they came on the morrow,  
They talk'd not over their task,  
As he listen'd there by the furrow;  
For the dead mouth could not ask—

### *The Soldier*

*How went the battle, my brothers?*

But that he will never know:  
For his mouth the red earth smothers  
As they shoulder their spades and go.

Yet he cannot sleep thereunder,

But ever must toss and turn.

*How went the battle, I wonder?*

—And that he will never learn!

*When winter trees bestrew the path,*

*Still to the twig a leaf or twain*

*Will cling and weep, not Winter's wrath,*

*But that foreknown, forlorn pain—*

*To fall when green leaves come again!*

## JEZEBEL

THIS is the song they made for Jezebel,  
The King's daughter of Zidon,  
Chanting her through the gate of Samaria  
By the way of Jezreel.

*Tz*ing-gong! to the tunable cymbals,  
Bells a-swing on her canopy,  
This is the song the Sons of Korah  
Lifted beneath the terebinths:  
Maschil, a Song of Loves for Jezebel,  
A bride meet for Ahab.

'Gladdened with lutes from ivory palaces,  
With Kings' daughters attendant,  
Scented of myrrh, of aloes, of cassia  
Come, O bridegroom, forth!  
Sworded on thigh and sceptred of equity,  
Fairer than children of men,  
Chrism'd of the Lord above thy fellows,  
Alight, O King, from thy chariot!  
Lead, to her throne beside thee, Jezebel  
Dazzling in gold of Ophir!'

—*But hush! the grooms are sponging his chariot  
By the pool of Samaria.*

## *Jezebel*

‘Hearken, O daughter! Leave to remember  
Thy people, thy father’s house:  
So shall the King desire thy loveliness—  
Worship thou him, thy lord!  
She of Tyre, that was thy playfellow,  
Sues thee now with a gift:  
The merchants also, thy friends aforetime,  
Henceforth are thy homagers.

‘Glorious within is the King’s daughter  
To whom the Isles pay tribute!  
Lead her, clothed in a garment of needlework,  
Lay her to bed, O Virgins!  
Whisper “Be comforted, bride of Israel,  
Thou that wast of Zidon:  
In place of fathers shall be thy children  
Princes in all the earth!”’

This was the song they made for Jezebel:  
Maschil, a Song of Loves.

—*But hush! The dogs are eating Jezebel,  
By the wall of Jezreel.*

## THE STATUES AND THE TEAR

ALL night a fountain pleads,  
Telling her beads,  
Her tinkling beads monotonous 'neath the moon;  
And where she springs atween,  
Two statues lean—  
Two Kings, their marble beards with moonlight strown.  
  
Till hate had frozen speech,  
Each hated each,  
Hated and died, and went unto his place:  
And still inveterate  
They lean and hate  
With glare of stone implacable, face to face.  
  
She, who bade set them here  
In stone austere,  
To both was dear, and did not guess at all:  
Yet with her new-wed lord  
Walking the sward  
Paused, and for two dead friends a tear let fall:  
  
So turn'd and went her way.  
Yet in the spray  
The shining tear attempts, but cannot lie.  
Night-long the fountain drips,  
But ever slips

*The Statues and the Tear*

Untold that one bead of her rosary:—

    While they, who know it would  
        Lie if it could,

Lean on and hate, watching it, eye to eye.

## THE SPLENDID SPUR

**N**OT on the neck of prince or hound,  
Nor on a woman's finger twined,  
May gold from the deriding ground  
Keep sacred that we sacred bind:  
Only the heel  
Of splendid steel  
Shall stand secure on sliding fate,  
When golden navies weep their freight.

The scarlet hat, the laurelled stave,  
Are measures, not the springs, of worth;  
In a wife's lap, as in a grave,  
Man's airy notions mix with earth.  
Seek other spur  
Bravely to stir  
The dust in this loud world, and tread  
An Alp among the whisp'ring dead!

*Trust in thyself*,—then spur amain!  
So shall Charybdis wear a grace,  
Grim Ætna laugh, the Libyan plain  
Take roses to her shrivelled face.  
This orb—this round  
Of sight and sound—  
Count it the lists that God hath built  
For haughty hearts to ride a-tilt.

## ALMA MATER

[OXFORD]

**K**now you her secret none can utter?  
Hers of the Book, the tripled Crown?  
Still on the spire the pigeons flutter,  
Still by the gateway flits the gown;  
Still on the street, from corbel and gutter,  
Faces of stone look down.

Faces of stone, and other faces—  
Some from library windows wan  
Forth on her gardens, her green spaces,  
Peer and turn to their books anon.  
Hence, my Muse, from the green oases  
Gather the tent, begone!

Nay, should she by the pavement linger  
Under the rooms where once she played,  
Who from the feast would rise to fling her  
One poor *sou* for her serenade?  
One short laugh for the antic finger  
Thrumming a lute-string frayed?

Once, my dear—but the world was young then—  
Magdalen elms and Trinity limes—

### *Alma Mater*

Lissom the blades and the backs that swung then,  
Eight good men in the good old times—  
Careless we, and the chorus flung then  
Under St. Mary's chimes!

Reins lay loose and the ways led random—  
Christ Church meadow and Iffley track,  
'Idleness horrid and dog-cart' (tandem),  
Aylesbury grind and Bicester pack—  
Pleasant our lines, and faith! we scanned 'em:  
Having that artless knack.

Come, old limmer, the times grow colder;  
Leaves of the creeper redder and fall.  
Was it a hand then clapped my shoulder?—  
Only the wind by the chapel wall!  
Dead leaves drift on the lute . . . So, fold her  
Under the faded shawl.

### **C. C. L. ASHOKNAGAR, HYD.**

Never we wince, though none deplore us,  
We who go reaping that we sowed;  
Cities at cock-crow wake before us—  
Hey, for the lilt of the London road!  
One look back, and a rousing chorus!  
Never a palinode!

### *Alma Mater*

Still on her spire the pigeons hover;  
Still by her gateway haunts the gown.  
Ah! but her secret? You, young lover,  
Drumming her old ones forth from town,  
Know you the secret none discover?  
Tell it—when *you* go down.

Yet if at length you seek her, prove her,  
Lean to her whispers never so nigh;  
Yet if at last, not less her lover,  
You in your hansom leave the High;  
Down from her towers a ray shall hover—  
Touch you, a passer-by!

## TO MAURICE HEWLETT

H<sup>E</sup>WLETT! as ship to ship  
Let us the ensign dip!

There may be who despise  
For dross our merchandise,  
Our balladries, our bales

Of woven tales;

Yet, Hewlett, the glad gales  
Favonian! And what spray  
Our dolphins toss'd in play,

Full in old Triton's beard, on Iris' shimmering veils!

Scant tho' the freight of gold

Commercial in our hold,

Pæstum, Eridanus

Perchance have barter'd us

'Bove chrematistic care

Some precious, rare,

Unmarketable ware;

Or amber to bedeck

A Grace's naked neck,

Or transient rose, yet meet to braid Apollo's hair.

Boon further wouldst thou beg

Of Jove? Then I've a keg

Of Coan in the waist.

Come, row aboard, and taste

*To Maurice Hewlett*

The glorifying juice  
That wise men use  
And only fools refuse!  
'Twill teach thee tolerate  
All rubs of human fate,

The which to mitigate are lent the Vine, the Muse.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME A BOX  
OF VIOLETS

N<sup>AY</sup>, more than violets  
These thoughts of thine, friend!  
Rather thy reedy brook—  
Taw's tributary—  
At midnight murmuring,  
Descried them, the delicate  
The dark-eyed goddesses,  
There by his cressy bed  
Dissolved and dreaming—  
Dreams that distilled into dew  
All the purple of night,  
All the shine of a planet.

Whereat he whispered;  
And they arising—  
Of day's forget-me-nots  
The duskier sisters—  
Descended, relinquished  
The orchard, the trout-pool,  
Torridge and Tamar,  
The Druid circles,  
Sheepfolds of Dartmoor,  
Granite and sandstone;  
By Roughtor, Dozmarè,

*To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets*

Down the vale of the Fowey  
Moving in silence,  
Brushing the nightshade  
By bridges cyclopean,  
By Trevenna, Treverbyn,  
Lewharne and Largin,  
By Glynn, Lanhydrock,  
Restormel, Lostwithiel,  
Dark wood, dim water, dreaming town;  
Down the vale of the Fowey  
To the tidal water  
Washing the feet  
Of holy St. Winnow—  
Each, in her exile  
Musing the message,  
Passed, as a starlit  
Phantom of Ruth from the land  
of the Moabite.

So they came,  
Valley-born, valley-nurtured—  
Came to the tideway  
The jetties, the anchorage,  
The salt wind piping,  
Snoring in Equinox,  
By ships at anchor,  
By quays tormented,

*To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets*

Storm-bitten streets;  
Came to The Haven  
Crying, 'Ah, shelter us,  
The strayed ambassadors,  
Love's lost legation  
On a comfortless coast!'

Nay, but a little sleep,  
A little folding  
Of petals to the lull  
Of quiet rainfalls—  
Here in my garden,  
In angle sheltered  
From north and east wind—  
Softly shall recreate  
The courage of charity,  
Henceforth not to me only  
Breathing the message.

Clean-breath'd Sirens!  
Henceforth the mariner  
Here in the fairway  
Fetching—foul of keel,  
Long-stray but fortunate—  
Out of the fogs, the vast  
Atlantic solitudes,  
Shall, by the hawser-pin

*To a Friend who sent me a Box of Violets*

Waiting the signal  
*Leave—go—anchor!*  
Scent the familiar,  
The unforgettable  
Fragrance of home;  
So in a long breath  
Bless all, unknowing:  
Bless them, the violets,  
Bless me, the gardener,  
Bless thee, the giver.

## OF THREE CHILDREN CHOOSING A CHAPLET OF VERSE

You and I and Burd so blithe—  
Burd so blithe, and you, and I—  
The Mower he would whet his scythe  
Before the dew was dry.

And he woke soon, but we woke soon  
And drew the nursery blind,  
All wondering at the waning moon  
With the small June roses twined:  
Low in her cradle swung the moon  
With an elfin dawn behind.

In whispers, while our elders slept,  
We knelt and said our prayers,  
And dress'd us and on tiptoe crept  
Adown the creaking stairs.

The world's possessors lay abed,  
And all the world was ours—  
'Nay, nay, but hark! the Mower's tread!  
And we must save the flowers!'

The Mower knew not rest nor haste—  
That old unwearied man:  
But we were young. We paused and raced  
And gathered while we ran.

## *Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse*

O youth is careless, youth is fleet,

With heart and wing of bird!

The lark flew up beneath our feet,

To his copse the pheasant whirr'd;

The cattle from their darkling lairs

Heaved up and stretch'd themselves;

Almost they trod at unawares

Upon the busy elves

That dropp'd their spools of gossamer,

To dangle and to dry,

And scurried home to the hollow fir

Where the white owl winks an eye.

Nor you, nor I, nor Burd so blithe

Had driven them in this haste;

But the old, old man, so lean and lithe,

That afar behind us paced;

So lean and lithe, with shoulder'd scythe,

And a whetstone at his waist.

Within the gate, in a grassy round

Whence they had earliest flown,

He upside-down'd his scythe, and ground

Its edge with careful hone.

But we heeded not, if we heard, the sound,

For the world was ours alone;

The world was ours!—and with a bound

The conquering Sun uphone!

## *Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse*

And while as from his level ray  
We stood our eyes to screen,  
The world was not as yesterday  
Our homelier world had been—  
So grey and golden-green it lay  
All in his quiet sheen,  
That wove the gold into the grey,  
The grey into the green.

Sure never hand of Puck, nor wand  
Of Mab the fairies' queen,  
Nor prince nor peer of fairyland  
Had power to weave that wide riband  
Of the grey, the gold, the green.

But the Gods of Greece had been before  
And walked our meads along;  
The great authentic Gods of yore  
That haunt the earth from shore to shore  
Trailing their robes of song.

And where a sandall'd foot had brush'd,  
And where a scarfèd hem,  
The flowers awoke from sleep and rush'd  
Like children after them.

Pell-mell they poured by vale and stream,  
By lawn and steepy brae—  
'O children, children! while you dream,  
Your flowers run all away!'

*Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse*

But afar and abed and sleepily  
The children heard us call;  
And Burd so blithe, and you, and I  
Must be gatherers for all.

The meadow-sweet beside the hedge  
The dog-rose and the vetch,  
The sworded iris 'mid the sedge  
The mallow by the ditch—

With these, and by the wimpling burn,  
Where the midges danced in reels,  
With the watermint and the lady fern  
We brimm'd our wicker creels:

Till, all so heavily they weigh'd,  
On a bank we flung us down,  
Shook out our treasures 'neath the shade  
And wove this Triple Crown—

Flower after flower—for some there were  
The noonday heats had dried,  
And some were dear yet could not bear  
A lovelier cheek beside,  
And some were perfect past compare—  
Ah, darlings! what a world of care  
It cost us to decide!

### *Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse*

Nathless we sang in sweet accord,  
Each bending o'er her brede—  
'O there be flowers in Oxenford,  
And flowers be north of Tweed,  
And flowers there be on earthly sward  
That owe no mortal seed!'

And these, the loveliest that we wove,  
Were Innocence and Truth,  
And holy Peace and angel Love,  
Glad Hope and gentle Ruth.  
Ah, bind them fast with triple twine  
Of Memory, the wild woodbine  
That still, being human, stays divine,  
And alone is age's youth! . . .

But hark! but look! the warning rook  
Wings home in level flight;  
The children tired with play and book  
Have kiss'd and call'd Good-night!

Ah, sisters, look! What fields be these  
That lie so sad and shorn?  
What hand has cut our coppices,  
And thro' the trimm'd, the ruin'd, trees  
Lets wail a wind forlorn?

## THE LEAST OF THESE

‘**L**ORD, in Thy Courts  
Are seats so green bestow’d,

As there resorts

    Along the dusty road

A cavalcade,—King, Bishop, Knight, and Judge:

And though I toil behind and meanly trudge,

    Let me, too, lie upon that pleasant sward,

    For I am weary, Lord.

‘Christ, at Thy board

    Are wines and dishes drest

That do afford

    Contentment to the best.

And though with Poverty my bed hath been

These many years, and my refreshment lean,

    With plenty now at last my soul acquaint,

    Dear Master, for I faint.’

But through the grille,

‘Where is thy Robe?’ said He:

‘Wouldst eat thy fill,

    Yet shirk civility?’

‘My Robe, alas! There was a little child

That shivered by the road——’ Swiftly God smiled:

‘I was that Child,’ said He, and raised the pin;

    ‘Dear friend, enter thou in!’

## TO BEARERS

**M**AIDS, carry her forth—your dead,  
Your pale young queen;  
Two at her feet, two at her head,  
And four between.—

Not as we wanted it,  
But as God granted it.

Not now to the swinging chime,  
To the organ swell,  
Keep we the rank, treading in time—  
But one dull bell.

Open the gates for her!  
The Bridegroom waits for her.

We never had dreamed it so:  
But she—she knew;  
Walking aloof, placid of brow,  
Her short life through:  
Scornful, in surety  
Guarding her purity.

Buds born for the bridal path  
Cover her breast:  
Babes of the dream now that she hath  
Sleep in her rest.  
Our peace above her let  
Fall for her coverlet.

### *Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse*

’Tis Time, ’tis Time has done this crime

And laid our meadows waste!—

The bent unwearied tyrant Time,

That knows nor rest nor haste.

Yet courage, children; homeward bring

Your hearts, your garlands high!

For we have dared to do a thing

That shall his worst defy.

We cannot nail the dial’s hand;

We cannot bind the sun

By Gibeon to stay and stand,

Or the moon o’er Ajalon;

We cannot blunt th’ abhorred shears,

Nor shift the skeins of Fate,

Nor say unto the posting years

‘Ye shall not desolate.’

We cannot cage the lion’s rage,

Nor teach the turtle-dove

Beside what well his moan to tell

Or to haunt one only grove;

But the lion’s brood will range for food

As the fledgèd bird will rove.

## *Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse*

And east and west we three may wend—

Yet we a wreath have wound  
For us shall wind withouten end  
The wide, wide world around:

Be it east or west, and ne'er so far,  
In east or west shall peep no star,  
No blossom break from ground,  
But minds us of the wreath we wove  
Of innocence and holy love

That in the meads we found,  
And handsell'd from the Mower's scythe,  
And bound with memory's living withe—  
You and I and Burd so blithe—

Three maidens on a mound:  
And all of happiness was ours  
Shall find remembrance 'mid the flowers,  
Shall take revival from the flowers  
And by the flowers be crown'd.

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Cover her breast:  
Babes of the dream now that she hath  
Sleep in her rest.  
Our peace above her let  
Fall for her coverlet.

## THE ROOT

DEEP, Love, yea, very deep,  
And in the dark exiled,  
I have no sense of light but still to creep  
And know the breast, but not the eyes. Thy child  
Saw ne'er his mother near, nor if she smiled;  
But only feels her weep.

Yet clouds and branches green  
There be aloft, somewhere,  
And winds, and angel birds that build between,  
As I believe—and I will not despair;  
For faith is evidence of things not seen.  
Love! if I could be there!

I will be patient, dear!  
Perchance some part of me  
Puts forth aloft and feels the rushing year,  
And shades the bird, and is that happy tree.  
Then were it strength to serve and not appear,  
And bliss, though blind, to be.

## JENIFER'S LOVE

**S**MALL is my secret—let it pass—  
Small in your life the share I had,  
Who sat beside you in the class,  
Awed by the bright superior lad:  
    Whom yet with hot and eager face  
    I prompted when he missed his place.

For you the call came swift and soon:—  
    But sometimes in your holidays  
You met me trudging home at noon  
    To dinner through the dusty ways,  
    And recognized, and with a nod  
    Passed on, but never guessed—thank God!

Truly our ways were separate.  
    I bent myself to hoe and drill,  
Yea, with an honest man to mate,  
    Fulfilling God Almighty's will;  
    And bore him children. But my prayers  
    Were yours—and, only after, theirs.

While you—still loftier, more remote,  
    You sprang from stair to stair of fame,  
And you've a riband on your coat,  
    And you've a title to your name.  
    But have you yet a star to shine  
    Above your bed, as I o'er mine?

## COTTAGE MUSK

OR in caprice or through neglect  
Gone is the Greengage, rusty-speck'd,  
Gone the Red Sage that once bedecked  
Our garden alleys.

But most I miss the Musk, of yore  
That scented every cottage door  
And pathway of the labouring poor,  
—But sweetiest Sally's.

Hers was a life together lent  
With it and its belonging scent—  
God knows which way or why they went—  
But you may go where  
You will, and search the countryside  
Where wavering clouds and waters glide:  
It died, the year that Sally died—  
You'll find it nowhere.

## PREMONITION

HE sat upon the cottage stair,—  
A tender child of three,  
And washed and dressed with wisest care  
The doll upon her knee.

And we, who guessed not why there grew  
In Annie's baby eyes  
That little clouding of the blue,  
That shade of awed surmise,

Remembered, in the darkened room,  
Where yesterday we took  
Our Annie's new-born babe, on whom  
Her eyes might never look.

## LOVE SEQUESTERED

**T**HOUGH in her grey unclouded eyes  
No cheat abode, nor compromise,  
But truth in clearest outline shone,  
And sin from honour stood alone;

Yet to be with her was to walk  
A faëry shore, and list the talk  
Of dropping streams, and nightingales,  
And gods dissolved in inland vales.

And though we loved and lived remote,  
Norfeat achieved deserving note,  
Each trivial step was sanctified  
In that we took it side by side.

TO A MOTHER, ON SEEING HER SMILE  
REPEATED IN HER DAUGHTER'S EYES

A THOUSAND songs I might have made  
Of You, and only You;  
A thousand thousand tongues of fire  
That trembled down a golden wire  
To lamp the night with stars, to braid  
The morning bough with dew.

Within the greenwood girl and boy  
Had loiter'd to their lure,  
And men in cities closed their books  
To dream of Spring and running brooks  
And all that ever was of joy  
For manhood to abjure.

And I'd have made them strong, so strong,  
Outlasting towers and towns—  
Millennial shepherds 'neath the thorn  
Had piped them to a world reborn,  
And danced Delight the dale along  
And up the daisied downs.

*To a Mother*

A thousand songs I might have made . . .  
But you required them not;  
Content to reign your little while  
Ere, abdicating with a smile,  
You pass'd into a shade, a shade  
Immortal—and forgot!

## EXMOOR VERSES

### I. VASHTI'S SONG

OVER the rim of the moor,  
And under the starry sky,  
Two men came to my door  
And rested them thereby.

Beneath the bough and the star,  
In a whispering foreign tongue  
They talked of a land afar  
And the merry days so young.

Beneath the dawn and the bough  
I heard them arise and go—  
And my heart it is aching now  
For the more it will never know.

Why did they two depart  
Before I could understand?  
Where lies that land, O my heart—  
O my heart, where lies that land?

### II. SATURN

FROM my farm, from her farm  
Furtively we came.  
In either home a hearth was warm:  
We nursed a hungrier flame.

## *Exmoor Verses*

Our feet were foul with mire,  
    Our faces blind with mist;  
But all the night was naked fire  
    About us where we kiss'd.

To hèr farm, to my farm,  
    Loathing we returned;  
Pale beneath a gallows' arm  
    The planet Saturn burned.

### III. DERECTION

O 'ER the tears that we shed, dear,  
    The bitter vines twist,  
And the hawk and the red deer  
    They keep where we kiss'd:  
All empty lies the shieling  
    That sheltered from rain,  
With a star to pierce the ceiling,  
    And the wind a broken pane.

Thro' the mist, up the moorway,  
    Fade hunters and pack;  
Down the ridge to the doorway  
    Homing voices float back . . .  
O, between the threads of mist, love,  
    Reach your hands from the house:  
Only mind that we kiss'd, love,  
    And forget the broken vows!

## THE GENTLE SAVAGE

**G**o down, my Soul, unto the river;  
The day is done, the mountain mute;  
Thou hast a message to deliver—  
Why loiterest yet irresolute?

See, on the farther bank,  
The lamp-light winking  
Across the city, cooling there her flank  
Like a beast drinking!

Down by the mill, the ghostly miller  
May see a twilit phantom steal  
And loose an arrow duskier, shriller,  
Than flies the bat about his wheel.

Arrow of secret call!  
Call to her only  
Who, at her window on the city wall,  
Waiteth so lonely.

**O** Mother, in thy royal chamber  
How barest thou such a son as I?  
Thou, cased at heart with pearl and amber,  
With starch and stiff embroidery:  
I, the brown Ishmaelite—  
I, whom the starry  
Summits behold at loose upon the night  
After my quarry?

### *The Gentle Savage*

Small Mother mine, amid thy roses  
Thy heart sings all the day content:  
The curtained wall that round thee closes  
Reminds not of imprisonment.

I, on the mountain-tops  
All the day roaming,  
Recall thee never till a shadow drops  
From the rook, homing.

That call renews our blood's confusion—  
Thy babe leaps naked back to thee:  
Thy soul remembers her seclusion,  
And mine abhors her liberty.

Suppliant I nestle then  
To thee the stronger,  
And seek my strength of thee, mother of men,  
Mere Queen no longer.

A moment—and our wiser senses  
Restore to each the life apart.

Yet, as the violet condenses  
All Venus in her dewy heart,  
So all the night I hear  
Thy lids distilling  
A love that holds in every purple tear  
Love's planet thrilling.

## THE COMRADE

STRANGER by the tavern board,  
Brown man with the splendid eyne,  
Thou and I make no accord  
Till thou give the countersign  
Here, across the Rhenish wine!

I had word in Trebizond  
Of thy favours to my blood,  
Of my father's cancelled bond,  
Why his widow lacked not food:  
Truly I believe thee good.

Well I know my mother's lips  
Called thee kinder than her Own  
In those months my wandered ships,  
Fouler than this red beard grown,  
Wallowed in a raving zone.

'Needs no token round thy neck!—  
Over deserts dusky white,  
Where the frosted quarter-deck  
Shivered back the Northern Light  
Through the aching Arctic night;

## *The Comrade*

By the coral-locked lagoon,  
    While upon the seamless blue  
Like a silver clasp, the moon  
    Drew the gauzèd night, wherethrough  
        Her two horns dripped honey-dew;

Thine the face that, first and last,  
    Haunted me. For thee I scanned  
Passing deck and lifting mast,  
    Peep of dawn and fall of land.  
        Now we meet—hold back thy hand!

Tho' thou smilest by the board,  
    Tho' our fingers itch to twine,  
Thou and I make no accord  
    Till I have the countersign  
        Here, across the Rhenish wine.

He that loves but half of Earth  
    Loves but half enough for me.  
Succourer of starving Worth,  
    Say, but could thy Charity  
        Stoop as pitiful a knee,  
  
Hold as equable a torch  
    O'er the hell that sinners tread?  
Tenderly, in windy porch,  
    Lift the drooping harlot's head,  
        As the good man's in his bed?

### *The Comrade*

Earth, that built our jolly bones,—

Earth, that brewed our jovial blood,—

In each atom of us owns

Spark of filial fire that should

Quicken to her parent mood.

Here, astride the breasts of Earth,

With the wind upon thy face,

Canst resound thy mother's mirth,

Catch a breath and say a grace

For the glory of the pace?—

Thankful for thy privilege

In the hunter's gallant stride,

In the glancing rapid's edge,

In the waters that divide

To thy nimble, naked pride;

Thankful for the climber's heel

Fast above the smooth ravine,

For the hand-shake of the wheel,

When the giddy royals lean

And the forefoot treads it green;

For the sleep of tired limbs,

For the feast of meat and wine,

For the merry laugh that brims

Labour with a froth divine?—

Pledge me this, and I am thine.

### *The Comrade*

Then to horse!—the gates are wide.  
Host, a cup before we go!  
He and I are pledged to ride  
Till the gust of onset blow  
Dead the failing spark; and so—  
  
Having reached, or failed to reach,  
In no Abbey will we lie,  
But upon a league-long beach  
Find the braver cemet'ry,  
Winnowed by the wave and sky.

## THE CAPTAIN

**T**HERE is a captain that commands,  
And never but to victory:  
'The counsel of thine heart it stands,  
No man so faithful unto thee.'  
Though seven senses watch the wall,  
And all thy courage leap at call,  
He is thine ark and arsenal,  
Thine armour and artillery.

Yea, while the cloakèd sentries tramp  
And challenge with a deep 'All's well!'  
He lists the sappers from the camp  
Encroaching on thy citadel;  
Invisible he tries the guns,  
And leaning o'er the bastions  
Discerns the tented legions,  
Earthwork and trench and parallel.

O man! in vain they creep and mine;  
Thy ramp remains inviolate.  
But if by folly or design  
Thou force that friend to abdicate,  
A broken pole, a trodden keep,  
The standard of thy soul shall weep,  
And all her trophies lie a heap  
That owls and satyrs desecrate.

## CHANT ROYAL OF HIGH VIRTUE

WHO lives in suit of armour pent  
And hides himself behind a wall,  
For him is not the great event,  
    The garland nor the Capitol.  
And is God's guerdon less than they?  
Nay, moral man, I tell thee Nay:  
Nor shall the flaming forts be won  
By sneaking negatives alone,  
    By Lenten fast or Ramazàn;  
But by the challenge proudly thrown—  
*Virtue is that becrows a Man!*

God, in His Palace resident  
    Of Bliss, beheld our sinful ball,  
And charged His own Son innocent  
    Us to redeem from Adam's fall.  
'Yet must it be that men Thee slay.'  
'Yea, tho' it must, must I obey,'  
Said Christ; and came, His royal Son,  
    To die, and dying to atone  
    For harlot, thief, and publican.  
Read on that rood He died upon—  
*Virtue is that becrows a Man!*

## *Chant Royal of High Virtue*

Beneath that rood where He was bent  
I saw the world's great captains all  
Pass riding home from tournament  
Adown the road from Roncesvalles—  
Lord Charlemagne, in one array  
Lords Cæsar, Cyrus, Attila,  
Lord Alisaundre of Macedon . . .  
With flame on lance and habergeon  
They passed, and to the rataplan  
Of drums gave salutation—  
*'Virtue is that becrows a Man!'*

Had tall Achilles lounged in tent  
For aye, and Xanthus neigh'd in stall,  
The towers of Troy had ne'er been shent,  
Nor stay'd the dance in Priam's hall.  
Bend o'er thy book till thou be grey,  
Read, mark, perpend, digest, survey,  
Instruct thee deep as Solomon,  
One only chapter thou shalt con,  
One lesson learn, one sentence scan,  
One title and one colophon—  
*'Virtue is that becrows a Man!'*

High Virtue's hest is eloquent  
With spur and not with martingall:  
Swear not to her thou'rt continent:  
BE COURTEOUS, BRAVE, AND LIBERAL.

*Chant Royal of High Virtue*

God fashion'd thee of chosen clay  
For service, nor did ever say,  
'Deny thee this,' 'Abstain from yon,'  
But to inure thee, thew and bone,  
To be confirmèd of the clan  
That made immortal Marathon—  
*Virtue is that becrows a Man!*

ENVOY

Young Knight, the lists are set to-day!  
Hereafter shall be time to pray  
In sepulture, with hands of stone..  
Ride, then! outride the bugle blown!  
And gaily dinging down the van  
Charge with a cheer—'Set on! Set on!  
*Virtue is that becrows a Man!*'

## THREE MEN OF TRURO

### I

E. W. B.

*Archbishop of Canterbury: sometime the First Bishop  
of Truro. October 1896*

THE Church's outpost on a neck of land—  
By ebb of faith the foremost left the last—  
Dull, starved of hope, we watched the driven sand  
Blown through the hour-glass, covering our past  
Counting no hours to our relief—no hail  
Across the hills, and on the sea no sail!

Sick of monotonous days we lost account,  
In fitful dreams remembering days of old  
And nights—th' erect Archangel on the Mount  
With sword that drank the dawn; the Vase of Gold,  
The moving Grail athwart the starry fields  
Where all the heavenly spearmen clashed their  
shields.

In dereliction by the deafening shore  
We sought no more aloft, but sank our eyes,  
Probing the sea for food, the earth for ore.  
Ah, yet had one good soldier of the skies  
Burst through the wrack reporting news of them,  
How had we run and kissed his tunic's hem!

### *Three Men of Truro*

Nay, but he came! Nay, but he stood and cried,  
Panting with joy and the fierce fervent race,  
'Arm, arm! for Christ returns!'—and all our pride,  
Our ancient pride, answered that eager face:  
'Repair His battlements!—Your Christ is near!'  
And, half in dream, we raised the soldiers' cheer.

Far, as we flung that challenge, fled the ghosts—  
Back, as we built, the obscene foe withdrew—  
High to the song of hammers sang the hosts  
Of Heaven—and lo! the daystar, and a new  
Dawn with its chalice and its wind as wine;  
And youth was hope, and life once more divine!  
• • • • •  
Day, and hot noon, and now the evening glow,  
And 'neath our scaffolding the city spread  
Twilit, with rain-wash'd roofs, and—hark!—below,  
One late bell tolling. 'Dead? Our Captain dead?'  
Nay, here with us he fronts the westering sun  
With shaded eyes and counts the wide fields won.

Aloft with us! And while another stone  
Swings to its socket, haste with trowel and hod!  
Win the old smile a moment ere, alone,  
Soars the great soul to bear report to God.  
Night falls; but thou, dear Captain, from thy star  
Look down, behold how bravely goes the war!

## *Three Men of Truro*

II

A. B. D.

*Canon Residentiary and Precentor of Truro*  
*December 1903.*

**M**ANY had builded, and, the building done,  
Through our adorned gates with din  
Came Prince and Priest, with pipe and clarion  
Leading the right God in.

Yet, had the perfect temple quickened then  
And whispered us between our song,  
'Give God the praise. To whom of living men  
Shall next our thanks belong?'

Then had the few, the very few, that wist  
His Atlantœan labour, swerved  
Their eyes to seek, and in the triumph missed,  
The man that most deserved.

He only of us was incorporate  
In all that fabric; stone by stone  
Had built his life in her, had made his fate  
And her perfection one;

Given all he had; and now—when all was given—  
Far spent, within a private shade,  
Heard the loud organ pealing praise to Heaven,  
And learned why man is made.—

### *Three Men of Truro*

To break his strength, yet always to be brave;  
To preach, and act, the Crucified . . .  
Sweep by, O Prince and Prelate, up the nave,  
And fill it with your pride!

Better than ye what made th' old temples great,  
Because he loved, he understood;  
Indignant that his darling, less in state,  
Should lack a martyr's blood.

She hath it now. O mason, strip away  
Her scaffolding, the flower disclose!  
Lay by the tools with his o'er-wearied clay—  
But She shall bloom unto its Judgement Day,  
His ever-living Rose!

### III

C. W. S.

*The Fourth Bishop of Truro*  
May 1912

PRINCE of courtesy defeated,  
Heir of hope untimely cheated,  
Throned awhile he sat and, seated,  
Saw his Cornish round him gather;  
'Teach us how to live, good Father!'  
How to die he taught us rather:

### *Three Men of Truro*

Heard the startling trumpet sound him,  
Smiled upon the feast around him,  
Rose, and wrapp'd his coat, and bound him

Where beyond the awful surges,  
Bathed in dawn on Syrian verges,  
God! thy star, thy Cross emerges.

*And so sing we all to it—*

*Crux, in cœlo lux superna,  
Sis in carnis hac taberna  
Mihi pedibus lucerna:*

*Quo vexillum dux cohortis  
Sistet, super flumen Mortis,  
Te, flammantibus in portis!*

## VICTORIA

(JUNE 22ND, 1893)

‘There was absolutely no panic, no shouting, no rushing aimlessly about. The officers went quietly to their stations. Everything was prepared, and the men were all in their positions. . . . I can further testify to the men below in the engine-rooms. . . . In all the details of this terrible accident one spot especially stands out, and that is the heroic conduct of those who to the end remained below, stolidly yet boldly, at their place of duty.’—*Captain Bourke’s Statement.*

QUEEN! What is this that comes  
Borne on thy rolling drums  
At sunrise from the far  
    Syrian borders?  
—Sped from the flags that fly  
Half-mast at Tripoli,  
    Where float the ships of war,  
    Thy virgin warders?  
  
Where tarries she who should  
Captain that sisterhood,  
    Named with thy name, and own  
    Offspring of Victory?  
Deep, eighty fathoms deep,  
She, with her crew asleep,  
    Recks not the signal flown,  
    Vain, valedictory.

## *Victoria*

Not in Thy day of wrath,  
Lord God of Sabaoth,  
    Nor upon rock or sand  
                Hemmed with Thy breath round;  
But leading tranquilly  
Upon a tranquil sea,  
    Swift at a sister's hand  
                Took she her death-wound.

So She, the stricken hull,  
The doomed, the beautiful,  
    Proudly to Death abased  
                Her brow Titanic.  
Praise now her multitude  
Who, nursed in fortitude,  
    Stood and their burial faced,  
                Scorners of panic.

Fate, that to admirals,  
Assigns their funerals,  
    To some the battle's ridge  
                Full-starred, to die on—  
Took not the spirit proud  
From him she less allowed.  
—Upright upon the bridge,  
                Sank the brave Tryon.

*Victoria*

Now for the seamen whom  
Thy not degenerate womb  
Bred thus to die for thee,  
England, be tearless:  
Rise, and with front serene  
Answer, thou Spartan queen,  
‘Still God is good to me:  
My sons are fearless.’

Back to the flags that fly  
Half-mast at Tripoli,  
Back on the sullen drum  
Mourning *Victoria*,  
Loud, ay, and jubilant,  
Hurl thine imperial chant—  
‘*In morte talium*  
*Stat Matriis gloria!*’

## CORONATION HYMN

*Tune*—Luther's Chorale

‘Ein' feste burg ist unser Gott’

### I

**O**f old our City hath renown,  
Of God are her foundations,  
Wherein this day a King we crown  
Elate among the nations.

Acknowledge, then, thou King—  
And you, ye people, sing—  
What deeds His arm hath wrought:  
Yea, let their tale be taught  
To endless generations.

### II

So long, so far, Jehovah guides  
His people's path attending,  
By pastures green and water-sides  
Toward His hill ascending;

Whence they beneath the stars  
Shall view their ancient wars,  
Their perils, far removed.

O might of mercy proved!  
O love past comprehending!

## *Coronation Hymn*

### III

He was that God, for man which spake  
From Sinai forth in thunder;  
He was that Love, for man which brake  
The dreadful grave asunder.

Lord over every lord,  
His consecrating word  
An earthly prince awaits;  
Lift then your heads, ye gates!  
Your King comes riding under.

### IV

Be ye lift up, ye deathless doors;  
Let wave your banners o'er Him!  
Exult, ye streets; be strewn, ye floors,  
With palm, with bay, before Him!  
With trumpets fetch Him in,  
Ye ransom'd folk from sin—  
Your Lord, return'd to bless!  
O kneeling king, confess—  
O subject men, adore Him!

## VIA SACRA

[TO A FRENCH FRIEND]

TOU that in years to come shalt tread this Sacred Way,

By Rheims to Vimy Ridge, to Belfort by Verdun,  
hrough weeping veils or fann'd by breath of summer  
gay,

Let lift thy heart, O man! in benediction.

alt, and let lift thy heart beside—no matter which—  
Hummock, or wooden cross, or bed of nettles where  
nce was a hearth,—dry well, or pervenche by the  
ditch—

Choose as thou wilt—be sure a son of France lies  
there.

—A child whose mother's hand even thus caressed his  
hair

As the wind smoothes the grass (Pray soft, O passer-  
by!):

Whose ear asleep her lip touch'd fluttering with a prayer,  
Whose lids asleep she conn'd with candle lifted high.

sleep, asleep—and now, in a huddle of bloody rags  
Asleep, dug in to rot and dung this eastering slope:  
laimed—‘was’ and ‘was to be’—by the tambours and  
the flags—

Pity the schoolboy's dream, but more the mother's  
hope!

*Via Sacra*

‘Monsieur, they died for France. Pity not us, nor these,  
Equal for France the French, the wife’s heart with  
the man’s:

Equal the horn of Roland high on the Pyrenees;  
Equal the lance of Joan in the gate of Orléans.

‘Domrémy! Vaucouleurs!—thou Rachel, raise no dirge,  
Thou Rizpah, croon no name to the distaff, to the  
yarn.

Maids again we ride by the Maid as she heads the surge  
Swinging the shield of Gaul ’cross Paris to the  
Marne!’

Mount, O man, to the ridge, to the calvary facing Metz,  
Behold the looping river, the poplars along the plain.  
And afar on the ramp an angel: hear from the parapets  
Her bugle to these dead sounding ‘Lorraine! Lor-  
raine!’

Orchards of France! Of these your fruit shall break  
again,  
Their blood, replenishing, make red the wine-vat’s  
flow,  
Their spirit wind in the breeze benignant over the  
grain,  
Blessing the child that gleans in fields his elders sow.

*Via Sacra*

Thou that in years to come shalt tread this Sacred Way  
Thy lesson learnt, return to thy Ville Lumière;  
To the boulevard, to the Bois, to the restaurant, to the  
play,  
To the supper, the all-night-lit and flaming thorough-  
fare.

But the bread thou dipp'st alone shall make no more a  
feast,  
Nor the wine thou sipp'st apart yield thee thine old  
content:  
The bread is the body broken; poured out for thee, O  
priest,  
This wine is the blood of man. Receive the sacra-  
ment.

Yet muse, and 'neath the arc thy soul shall find her  
peace;  
Child of a day—for France, thy France, no more  
afraid—  
In thy wet eyes the street-lamps waver the fleurs-de-  
lys,—  
Hark! up the Avenue, the nightride of the Maid!

## SONNET

### ISLES OF SCILLY

I SAW Narcissus in a portico  
Leaning his ear toward the yellow bells  
Of his own flower, festooned, that from the shells  
Voluted on the pavement, caught the low  
Long echoes of an Archipelago  
Afar, beyond the pillared parallels  
Wherein a soft wind wound, and nothing else,  
Between his shoulder and the afterglow.

Figure of bronze! Thou listenest alway:  
Ever for thee that lazy song beguiles.  
But I must wake, and toil again, and pray;  
And yet will come but rarely, and at whiles,  
The shout and vision of the sea-gods grey,  
Stampeding by the lone Scillonian isles.

## HESPERUS

DOWN in the street the last late hansoms go  
Still westward, but with backward eyes of red  
The harlot shuffles to her lonely bed;  
The tall policeman pauses but to throw  
A flash into the empty portico;  
Then he too passes, and his lonely tread  
Links all the long-drawn gas-lights on a thread  
And ties them to one planet swinging low.

O Hesperus! O happy star! to bend  
O'er Helen's bosom in the trancèd west—  
To watch the hours heave by upon her breast  
And at her parted lip for dreams attend:  
If dawn defraud thee, how shall I be deem'd,  
Who house within that bosom, and am dreamed?

## CHRISTMAS EVE

FRIEND, old friend in the Manse by the fireside sitting,  
Hour by hour while the greyash drips from the log,  
You with a book on your knee, your wife with her  
knitting,

Silent both, and between you, silent, the dog.  
Silent here in the South sit I; and, leaning,

One sits watching the fire, with chin upon hand;  
Gazes deep in its heart—but ah! its meaning  
Rather I read in the shadows and understand.

Dear, kind she is; and daily dearer, kinder,  
Love shuts the door on the lamp and our two selves:  
Not my stirring awakened the flame that behind her  
Lit up a face in the leathern dusk of the shelves.

Veterans are my books, with tarnished gilding:  
Yet there is one gives back to the winter grate  
Gold of a sunset flooding a college building,  
Gold of an hour I waited—as now I wait—

For a light step on the stair, a girl's low laughter,  
Rustle of silk, shy knuckles tapping the oak,  
Dinner and mirth upsetting my rooms and, after,  
Music, waltz upon waltz, till the June day broke.

Where is her laughter now? Old tarnished covers—  
You that reflect her with fresh young face un-  
changed—

## *Christmas Eve*

Tell that we met, that we parted, not as lovers;  
Time, chance, brought us together, and these  
estranged.

Loyal were we to the mood of the moment granted,  
Bruised not its bloom, but danced on the wave of its  
joy:

Passion—wisdom—fell back like a fence enchanted,  
Ringing a floor for us both—whole Heaven for the  
boy!

Where is she now? Regretted not, though departed,  
Blessings attend and follow her all her days!  
—Look to your hound: he dreams of the hares he  
started,  
Whines, and awakes, and stretches his limbs to the  
blaze.

Far old friend in the Manse, by the grey ash peeling  
Flake by flake from the heat in the Yule log's core,  
Look past the woman you love. On wall and ceiling  
Climbs not a trellis of roses—and ghosts—of yore?

Thoughts, thoughts! Whistle them back like hounds  
returning—  
Mark how her needles pause at a sound upstairs.  
Time for bed, and to leave the log's heart burning!  
Give ye good-night, but first thank God in your  
prayers!

## CHILD'S CAROL

**N**AKED boy, brown boy,  
In the snow deep,  
Piping, carolling  
Folks out of sleep;  
Little shoes, thin shoes,  
All so wet and worn—  
But I bring the merry news  
—Christ is born!

Rise, pretty mistress!  
Don a gay silk;  
Give me for my good news  
Bread and new milk.  
Joy, joy in Jewry,  
This very morn!  
Far and far I carry it  
—Christ is born!

Back, back in Bethl'em,  
By the moon still,  
There I saw a shepherd  
Sitting on a hill:  
'Boy,' said he, 'bonny boy,  
Take you this horn,  
Wend you now and wind it,  
—Christ is born!'

*Child's Carol*

And whenever people  
    Hear the merry blast,  
Bells in every steeple,  
    Flags on every mast,  
Holy boughs and holly  
    Adore and adorn,  
Far and far and jubilant  
—Christ is born!

Therefore I would have you  
    People comprehend  
Christ is born in Bethl'em  
    For to be your friend:  
For to bear the agony,  
    For to wear the thorn,  
For to die on Calvary,  
—Christ is born!

## CAROL

**F**LING out, fling out your windows wide!  
I bring you joy this Christmas-tide:  
To-day is born in Bethlehem  
A son of royal David's stem:  
Then sing and rest you satisfied—  
*In excelsis gloria!*

'Where is the royal Babe arrayed?'  
Lo! He is in a manger laid;  
The Lord of life an ox's guest—  
But warm He lies on Mary's breast?  
Then sing and rest you undismayed.

'How may we find His manger-bed?'  
There shines a star above His head;  
And choirs of viewless Cherubin  
Shall guide you to that humble inn:  
Then sing and rest you comforted.

'And is it He that should be sent?'  
Three kings came from the Orient  
A-riding with the tokens three  
From Ind, Cathay, and Arabye:  
Then sing and rest you confident.

*Carol*

‘What bringeth He, this new-born King?’

Lo! all good gifts there are to bring.

‘Tis He shall turn your tears to mirth,

And send goodwill and peace on earth:

Then kneel, and rest you worshipping—

*In excelsis gloria!*

## HOLY INNOCENTS

U  
s Herod slew,  
Willing to slay the infant Christ, our Lord.  
But from the sword  
Our tender life in globes of lighted dew  
Trickled and twinkling ran  
Before Him to the waste Egyptian,  
Gilding His way like glow-worms on the sward.

Now in His house  
He draweth us to deck the Christmas fir  
From chest of myrrh;  
Whom as Aunt Mary bindeth on the boughs,  
Her eyes drop happy rain  
For sorrow past—and lo! we live again  
As babies trembling in the tears of her.

# SONGS



## NUPTIAL NIGHT

**H**USH! and again the chatter of the starling  
Athwart the lawn!  
Lean your head close and closer, O my darling!—  
    It is the dawn.  
Dawn in the dusk of her dream,  
    Dream in the hush of her bosom, unclose!  
Bathed in the wakening beam,  
    Blush to her cheek, be a blossom, a rose!  
Pass, purple Night, the floor of Ocean spilling  
    With scent and star,  
To casements lit and luted music thrilling  
    By coasts afar.  
Holy, thy hand on the rail,  
    Mother of Mystery, muting thy tread:  
Loosen thy locks for a veil  
    Over the maiden to-morrow shall bed.  
Go, nuptial night, my breast of hers bereaving!  
    Yet O, tread soft!  
Come, golden day, the mountain shoulder heaving  
    More gold aloft!  
Gold, rose, bird of the dawn  
    All to her aubade gather unseen.  
Thrill thro' the curtain drawn,  
    Bathe her, bedeck her, behymn her, my Queen!

## HELPORD RIVER

**H**ELFORD RIVER, Helford River,  
Blessed may ye be!  
We sailed up Helford River  
By Durgan from the sea.

O to hear the hawser chain  
Rattle by the ferry there!  
Dear, and shall we come again  
By Bosahan,  
By wood and water fair?

All the wood to ransack,  
All the wave explore—  
Moon on Calamansack,  
Ripple on the shore.

—Laid asleep and dreaming  
On our cabin beds;  
Helford River streaming  
By two happy heads;

—Helford River, streaming  
By Durgan to the sea,  
Much have we been dreaming  
Since we dreamed by thee.

*Helford River*

Dear, and shall we dream again  
The one dream there?  
All may go if that remain  
By Bosahan,  
And the old face wear!

## THE KERCHIEF

WHEN first I 'gan to know thee, dear,  
Thy faults I did espy;  
And 'Sure this is a blemish here,  
And that's a blot,' said I.

But from that hour I did resign  
My judgement to my fate,  
Thou art no more than only mine  
To love and vindicate.

The kerchief that thou gav'st I wear  
Upon mine eyelids bound,  
And every man I meet I dare  
To find the faults I found.

## ‘TO THE LAND WHERE YE GO . . .’

To the land where ye go  
Ye may not beckon me;  
In the ranks ye shall know  
Ye shall not reckon me.  
On the earth ye did move  
As deep below as high above  
All our propoundings.  
I cast a plummet in your love  
And found no soundings.

Pools of heaven were your eyes;  
Their deeps rejected not  
One whom wide Paradise  
Pitied, reflected not.  
Was it time lost to lean  
My longing lip toward the clean  
Well-spring of healing,  
Surprise the soul mine might have been,  
And ponder, kneeling?

## A FIDDLER'S VALENTINE

PRETTY player, from thy strings  
Little whispers take them wings—  
    Take them wings and hie to me!  
In my hollow heart they dwell  
Swinging it as 'twere a bell  
    Ding-a-ding inside o' me.  
Hand to play and heart to ring—  
Together might they make a spring  
On earth beyond imagining:  
    But nay, and nay—  
    For now my love's denied to me.  
Therefore, dear, lay down thy fiddle,  
Clip me once around the middle,  
    Kiss, and say good-bye to me!

## MARY LESLIE

*Before Vittoria, June 20, 1813*

**O**MARY LESLIE, blithe and shrill  
The bugles blew for Spain:  
And you below the Castle Hill  
Stood in the crowd your lane.  
Then hearts were wild to watch us pass,  
Yet laith to let us go!  
While mine said, 'Fare-ye-well, my lass!'  
And yours, 'God keep my jo!'

Here by the bivouac fire, above  
These fields of savage play,  
I'll lift my love to meet thy love  
Twa thousand miles away,  
Where yonder, yonder by the stars,  
Nightlong there rins a burn,  
And maids with lovers at the wars  
May list their wraiths' return.

More careless yet my spirit grows  
Of fame, more sick of blood:  
But I can think of Badajoz,  
And yet that God is good.

*Mary Leslie*

Beyond the siege, beyond the stour,  
    Beyond the sack of towns,  
I reach to pluck ae lily-floo'r  
    Where leaders press for crowns.

## THE LAMP AND THE GUITAR

My love, she lives in Salamanca  
All up a dozen flights of stairs;  
There with the sparrows night and morning  
Under the roof she chirps her prayers.

They say her wisdom comes from heaven—  
So near the clouds and chimneys meet—  
*I* rather think Luisa's sparrows  
Fetch it aloft there from the street!

What would you have? In la Verdura  
All the day long she keeps a stall:  
Students, bachelors buy her nosegays,  
Given with a look and—well that's all!  
King of her love, with no Prime Minister,  
Lord of an attic blithe I'd reign,  
But *ay de mi!* from here to Finisterre  
Pretty Luisa loves all Spain.

Pretty Luisa's democratic:  
Every peseta wears its crown.  
What is it worth to rent an attic  
If on the world you don't look down?  
Go, silly boy, believe you first with her—  
Twenty at once she'll entertain.  
Why love a mistress and be curst with her?  
Copy Luisa—love all Spain!

## THE MARINE

(POITEVIN)

THE bold Marine comes back from war,  
So kind:

The bold Marine comes back from war,  
So kind:

With a raggety coat and a worn-out shoe.

'Now, poor Marine, say, whence come you,  
All so kind?'

'I travel back from the war, madame,  
So kind:

I travel back from the war, madame,  
So kind:

For a glass of wine and a bowl of whey,

'Tis I will sing you a ballad gay,  
All so kind.'

The bold Marine he sips his whey,  
So kind:

He sips and he sings his ballad gay,  
So kind:

But the dame she turns toward the wall,  
To wipe her tears that fall and fall,  
All so kind.

### *The Marine*

‘What aileth you at my song, madame,  
So kind?’

I hope that I sing no wrong, madame,  
So kind?’

Or grieves it you a beggar should dine  
On a bowl of whey and the good white wine,  
All so kind?’

‘It ails me not at your ballad gay,  
So kind:

It ails me not for the wine and whey,  
So kind:

But it ails me sore for the voice and eyes  
Of a good man long in Paradise.—  
Ah, so kind!’

‘You have fair children five, madame,  
So kind:

You have fair children five, madame,  
So kind:

Your good man left you children three;  
Whence came these twain for company,  
All so kind?’

‘A letter came from the war, Marine,  
So kind:

A letter came from the war, Marine,  
So kind:

### *The Marine*

A while I wept for the good man dead,  
But another good man in a while I wed,  
    All so kind.'

The bold Marine he drained his glass,  
    So kind:

The bold Marine he drained his glass,  
    So kind.

He said not a word, though the tears they flowed,  
But back to his regiment took the road,  
    All so kind.

## IA'S SONG

LONG before day I left my father's cottage,  
I went by the tamarisks upon the hedges by the sea,  
Seeking my lovely one, my comforter, before the  
morning.

My brothers three lie drowned by Dolor Oogo.  
They call in the night: 'Little sister, when is the wed-  
ding?  
It is cold waiting, and thou a drudge in our father's  
cottage.'

Now must I go and whisper them 'Not yet'—  
Not yet; but the thyme of the hedge kisses my naked  
foot—  
So will he kiss me soon, and comfort me, my pretty  
lover.

Then will I kneel by him, and he shall bandage  
The wounds of the brambles, and I, kneeling beside  
him,  
Softly, my arm holding his waist, will kiss him—ah,  
when?

## MANATON

O IT'S Manaton, little Manaton, high over th  
Moor—

And I led my love to Manaton, and she twenty-four:

O I took my love to Manaton, and I twenty-five—

An 'tis that's the pretty time-o'-life for young men t  
wive.

O 'twas walking back from Manaton, half-way to th  
Cleeve,

By the stones of Becky Waterfall my love touched m  
sleeve—

'Ah, to-day has been the honey-day if 'tweren't for th  
pain

That you and I and Manaton might ne'er meet again!"

O it's Manaton, little Manaton, bides there just th  
same:

But 'twas yesterday, to Manaton alone as I came,  
That I turned in sight of Manaton, my heart moidered s  
For the want of her and Manaton, and the long whil  
ago.

## TWO DUETS

*From 'Arion', an unpublished Masque*

### I

*He.* **A**GLAI-A! Aglai-a!  
    Sweet, awaken and be glad.  
*She.* Who is this that calls Aglaia?  
    Is it thou, my dearest lad?  
*He.* 'Tis Arion, 'tis Arion,  
    Who calls thee from sleep—  
    From slumber who bids thee  
    To follow and number  
    His kids and his sheep.  
*She.* Nay, leave to entreat me!  
    If mother should spy on  
    Us twain, she would beat me.  
*He.* Then come, my love, come!  
    And hide with Arion  
    Where green woods are dumb!

*She.* Ar-i-on! Ar-i-on!  
    Closer, list! I am afraid!  
*He.* Whisper, then, thy love Arion,  
    From thy window, lily maid.  
*She.* Yet Aglaia, yet Aglaia  
    Hath heard them debate

## *Two Duets*

Of wooing repenting—  
‘Who trust to undoing,  
Lament them too late.’

*He.* Nay, nay, when I woo thee,  
Thy mother might spy on  
All harm I shall do thee.

*She.* I come, then—I come!  
To follow Arion  
Where green woods be dumb.

### SONG

Sparrow of Love, so sharp to peck,  
Arrow of Love—I bare my neck  
Down to the bosom. See, no fleck

Of blood! I have never a wound; I go  
Forth to the greenwood. Yet, heigh-ho!  
What 'neath my girdle flutters so?

’Tis not a bird, and yet hath wings,  
’Tis not an arrow, yet it stings;  
While in the wound it nests and sings—  
Heigh-ho!

*He.* Of Arion, of Arion  
That wound thou shalt learn;  
What nothings 'tis made of,  
And soft pretty soothings  
In shade of the fern.

## *Two Duets*

*She.* When maids have a mind to,  
    Man's word they rely on,  
Old warning are blind to—  
    I come, then—I come  
        To walk with Arion  
    Where green woods are dumb!

### II

*He.* Dear my love, and O my love,  
    And O my love so lately  
Did we wander yonder grove  
    And sit awhile sedately?  
For either you did there conclude  
    To do at length as I did,  
Or passion's fashion's turn'd a prude,  
    And troth's an oath derided.

*She.* Yea, my love—and nay, my love—  
    And ask me not to tell, love,  
While I delay'd an idle day  
    What 'twixt us there befell, love.  
Yet either I did sit beside  
    And do at length as you did,  
Or my delight is lightly by  
    An idle lie deluded!

## COLUMBUS AT SEVILLE

DEAR son, Diego, I am old and deaf:  
Here to my room in Seville some one came  
—To-day or yesterday, who knows? The blinds  
Are closed, and no sun moves upon the floor—  
Here to my room in Seville some one came  
And muttered that the Queen is dead. I trust  
She rests in glory, far from all the cares  
Of this rough world she made less penible  
For two much-travelled feet that here inert  
Wait by the ripple of the Blessèd Ford,  
Yet may not to its running cool unlace  
Until my Master give the happy word.

I have been loyal: flouted for a fool,  
I have been loyal: lifted above lords,  
I have been loyal: once again abased,  
Beggared and led a prisoner in chains,  
I have been loyal still. But I believe  
God sets on kings His sigil for a test,  
And only they who bear it to His bourne  
By widows' tears uncancelled, without scratch  
Of fetters wrongfully imposed, undimmed  
By sighs of just petitioners, may claim  
To hear their charter yonder reconfirmed.  
Who fails—his province shall another take,

### *Columbus at Seville*

One chosen from the spirits of just men  
Made perfect. And his own debt shall every one  
Here or hereafter, soon or late, redeem.  
Who plights his dignity against a debt,  
As Ferdinand; who thus evades a debt,  
As Ferdinand, and forfeits faith of man;  
Shall find that faith confront him by the Throne  
In angels' blushes, and his honours melt  
For payment in their slow celestial scorn.

But she, my Mistress, diadem of all  
His dignity, was never Ferdinand's.  
Born of that royal few who ride abroad  
And see their humbler, happier sisters throw  
Free glances from their windows on the street;  
Or by the bridge or by the bathing-pool  
Passing with nun-like faces, catch a hint  
And bear it home and wonder all the night  
Stretched by their lords, listing the serenades  
That well by distant balconies passionate;  
She—though her priestess' body she abased  
Coldly to public need—lent it to wed  
Castille with Aragon—was devotee  
To none but duty. On this earth she knew  
No passion but a friendship purified,  
Unspotted of the flesh, prophetical  
Of that sublimer passion of the saints  
Her innocence now inherits.—Not for me!

## *Columbus at Seville*

As not for Ferdinand! But this I hope—  
To meet her walking 'neath the boughs of Life,  
To touch her hand without servility,  
And in the salutation of her eyes  
Read resolution of the musing care  
That clouded them aforetime, half with doubt  
And half with pitiful knowledge.

Oh, they swept

Down from the dais eloquent, wave on wave!  
In every wave brooded a starry thought;  
In every thought brooded a litten tongue,  
Holy, with comfortable words. And yet  
I have looked into them as a mother looks,  
And in the iris of her week-old babe  
Reads now but natal innocence, and now  
The absorbèd wisdom of an age-worn past  
Blinking its own new dawn. They did allow  
The wonder of man's weakness, even while  
They pierced unto his greatness and the hope.

Nathless at first I did believe her cold  
—Jesu! She cold!—cold as the icèd rim  
'Engaged my hot heart there by Pinos bridge.  
Tight-corded as my holster was the bale,  
The slender bale of hope I carried then,  
If somewhere I might find the world so wide  
As to contain one courage bold to mate

## *Columbus at Seville*

With me to push it wider—wide enough  
To satisfy the more adventurous clans  
Yet in the womb waiting the moment's call.  
For Portugal had cheated, England sent  
No word, and of Bartholomew no report  
Came on the wandermost tales of them who drew  
Forth from the northern fogs in caravel  
Galley or barque or pinnace. Day by day  
For two long years, seated among my books,  
Maps, charts, and cross-staves, in the little shop  
By Seville bridge, incessant I had watched  
The Guadalquivir through a dusty pane;  
Had watched the thin mast creep around the point;  
Had watched the slow hull warp across the tide,  
And the long flank fall lazy to the quay  
—Levantine traders bringing Tyrian wine,  
Malmsey from Crete, fine lawn of Cyprus, silk  
Of Egypt and of India; Genovese,  
Whose sheer I conned and knew the shipwright's  
name  
—Feluccas, with a world of eastern spice  
Bartered of Caspian merchants on the bar  
Of Poti, or of Emosaïd clans  
Down the Red Sea and south to Mozambique:  
True aloes of Socotra, galbanum,  
Myrrh, cassia, rhubarb, scented calamus,  
Sweet storax, cinnamon, attars of the rose

### *Columbus at Seville*

And jasmine. And of some the skippers wore  
Skin purses belted underneath their knives  
—Spoilers of Ormuz or of Serendib,  
Who sought the jeweller's offices ere they slept  
Or drank ashore. These from the sunrise all:  
But others from the dark and narrow seas  
By England and by Flanders. Tin they brought  
In blocks and bars, and lead and pewter-ware  
Shipped at Southampton; Lace and napery  
Of Ypres and of Malines; Frankish wools  
In bulk from Calais' warehouses; or spun  
By English hands, grey kersey, fustian, cloth,  
From Guildford, Norwich, London.—

Ay, but none

Brought tidings of Bartholomew. One and all,  
Still to my questioning the shipmen stared  
And shook their silver earrings: not a word!  
Oft—as the Orcadian watcher from his rock  
Scans the grey tide-race eddying by his line—  
In tavern corner by an empty cup  
I have heard the reboant captains boast and swell;  
Alert, if haply, on vainglorious tale  
Or outland lie reported, there might drift  
Some flotsam of the dim West unexplored.  
Bird of my hope! How long ye beat a wing  
In yon unfathomable fogs, and still

## *Columbus at Seville*

Of green no sign!—the waters ever void,  
No token, no retrieve of Noë's dove!

At Salamanca then they tested us;  
Churchmen and schoolmen and cosmogoners  
In council. 'Hey!' and 'What?' 'The earth a sphere?  
And two ways to Cathaia?' 'Tut and tush!'  
'Feared the Cathaians then no blood in the head  
From walking upside-down?' 'Pray did I know  
Of a ship 'would sail up-hill?' 'Had I not heard  
Perchance of latitudes where the wheel of the sun  
Kept the sea boiling? Of the tropic point  
Where white men turned hop-skip to blackamoors?'  
'And hark ye, sir, to what Augustine says,  
And here is Cosmas' map. "*God built the world*  
*As a tabernacle: sky for roof and sides,*  
*And earth for flooring . . . Made all men to dwell*  
*Upon the face of it*"—the face, you hear,  
Not several faces—"On foundations laid  
*The earth abides*"—*foundations*, if you please,  
Not mid-air. Soothly, sir, at your conceits  
We smile, but warn you that they lie not far  
On this side heresy. "Antipodes," hey?  
Our Mother Church annuls the Antipodes.'

Fools, fools, Diego! Ay, but folly makes  
More orphans than malevolence.

## *Columbus at Seville*

There I stood  
Rejected, and the good Queen looked on me.  
She did not smile. Thank God she did not smile!  
She did not speak. I saw the mute lips move  
Compassionate, and took defeat, went forth.

Nay, no compassion now! With scorn of men  
I bound my wound, and nursed it while I rode.  
France now, or England? Still the wound complained,  
And still I closed the purple lips with scorn;  
Till there on Pinos bridge my horses hoof  
Rang, and the vaulted echo halloo'd 'Scorn!'  
And so—

I do remember, on a time,  
Off Cape St. Vincent in a general fight,  
How that one master of a sinking hull  
—An Antwerp captain—danced about his deck  
Like paper in a gale, and cursed and bawled,  
And cursed again and shook his fist and bawled,  
Belabouring his gunners—fat and fierce  
As a fool's bladder, wholly ludicrous;  
Till running to the bulwarks, all aflush  
To hurl some late-remembered oath, he leaned,  
Collapsed in bloody vomit, and so died.

So with the bridge's echo welled afresh  
My wound above its bandages. I lit

### *Columbus at Seville*

Down from my horse and o'er the parapet bowed  
In sickness of surrender; let my hopes  
Unhusk in tears upon the silly stream  
That ran ecstatic, with a babbling lip  
A-flush for the salt tide, and knew not yet  
The smart of that embrace. 'Run, happy fool!  
Aspire to make impression on the main,  
'Will swallow thee with all thy freshet wave  
As kings digest the tributary zeal  
Of private men, and so spit forth their names.'

So leaned I, listless to a gallop of hoofs  
'Woke distant on the north-east road and swept  
Down in a smother of dust. I sprang to the bit,  
And backed to let the posting rider past.  
But he reined sudden and wheeled. 'Why this will be  
—Steady, thou sprawler!—this will be the man,  
The Genovese himself! Sir, I have ridden—  
The Queen commands you back to Santa Fé.  
Plague o' this dust!' I looked him up and down:  
A little dapper gentleman of the camp,  
Flicking with scented kerchief at his coat  
Of velvet laced with amber, like a bee's,  
And condescending with a silly smile.  
And still he smiled; and still I pondered him,  
As a father, listening in his closet, hears  
The first cry of his first-born child, and turns

## *Columbus at Seville*

To watch an idle bee upon the pane,  
And still in the midwife's message hears it buzz.  
'The Queen commands—' 'So—I believe you, sir':  
Then slowlier: 'And I will trust the Queen.'  
With eyebrows lifted, and a brisk salute,  
He shook his rein, dug spur, and started back  
A-trot with the answer.

Haste, O bobbing bee!

Be minister of marriage 'twixt two minds,  
Two flowers that twine the challenge of their gaze  
And know no fleshlier union. Soar, O bee!  
Hence from the moat up, up to the lady-flower  
Swaying in sunlight high on the palace wall;  
Creep in her leaning languid bosom, and there  
Do thy close work, whisper, impregnate her  
With a secret such as lowlier blossoms breathe  
At twilight, one to another, nodding anigh  
With petalled nightcaps, while th' eaves-dropping  
breeze  
Steals by the lily-bordered garden beds.  
Nay; 'tis a chaster deed thou hast in hand  
—To marry mind with mind. Stand but afar  
And speak: thou hast a word that not alone  
Will breed conception of a queenly thought,  
But wake the generations of the world.  
Dame of the castle! Leman of the road!  
Leap with the quickening babe and press your side!

## *Columbus at Seville*

He hath the resurrection in his heel,  
Treads underfoot the doom of all his sires,  
And springs upon the tight cords wherewithal  
In turn they bound each other to the pit.  
Dame of the castle! Leman of the road!  
Enlarge your girdles!—for this conquering babe  
Shall westward launch and draw with silver wake  
An honourable girdle round the waist  
Of Mother Earth, beneath her swelling breasts—  
The Old World and the New. O moons of man!  
A Spirit moves upon the middle deeps,  
And all their odic tides acclaim the Babe!

Back then I rode: but coolly Reason came  
With sight of Santa Fé, and plucked my rein—  
‘Be temperate: for kings have many cares  
And thou one vision only. See these walls,  
These tented lines; and yonder on the cliff,  
At her last gasp, Granada! Tranquilly,  
As ’twere on oilèd hinge, the sentinel  
Paces her terrace. Evening for her wounds  
Hath golden ointment, were they curable.  
But at their meat the dusky councillors  
Mutter “To-morrow!” and upon the wall  
The whisperers surmise. “To-morrow? Ay—  
There dawns one only morrow for the Moor!”  
But O, what blood! O man, what hammer-blows

## *Columbus at Seville*

Have built that morrow! Christendom redeems  
The debt, attains the dream. O give her space,  
A kindly space before she dream again!'

Soberly then I cleansed me of the dust  
Of travel; stood within the royal tent  
With brow composed. And she with brow composed  
Questioned my hope as 'twere i' the level round  
Of a Queen's audience. Cold? I did not know  
She had sought to pledge her jewels for that hope!  
Only her tone took up the challenge flung  
By my obeisance, challenging in turn  
Her Court, as who should say, 'Behold this man,  
He offers a new heaven, a new earth;  
And claims to hold them for us, taking tithe  
As Governor, and for his share one-eighth  
Of his adventure's profit, with the style  
Of Admiral of the Ocean, privilege  
As high as our High Admiral's of Castile:  
Well worth it, an his promises bear fruit.  
I test him at the furthest of his claim—  
Go, sir—so much an unbelieving world  
Concedes its Queen: derisive lets her launch  
Fresh hopes forlorn upon its unbelief—  
Go, sir, and prove the courage of thy faith.'

And Faith, my son, the substance is of things  
Hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

## *Columbus at Seville*

The substance? ay, I trod it!—not the deck,  
The barren deck whereon my comrades cursed  
The wind, the smooth sea running like a stream  
Still westward, westward through an empty world.  
Nay, while they cursed, my feet already pressed  
The yellow sands, waded the rivulets  
And long cool grasses of those isles afar.  
The evidence? I saw it!—not the weed,  
The crab, the berried branch, the emperor-fish,  
The tropic birds that sang about the mast  
As 'twere a sweet-briar bursting into bud  
In Seville, in the Andalusian spring.

—Signs and a *sursum corda* for the faint  
And faithless. Sudden then a few would crowd  
Forward, and point, and hail the dull blue smear  
Far on the sky-line. ‘News, Lord Admiral!  
A land-fall, ho! and luck be with the news!’  
—So watch it fade, and curse more bitterly.  
Me neither hope nor omen, true or false,  
Elated or depressed. Always I bore  
The certainty within me, and the seal  
Of God upon it, and the face imposed  
Of her, my Mistress. Always on the poop,  
A man apart, I stood and steered a course  
Unerring, by the magnet of my doom.  
Others might watch, all eager for the prize—  
The thirty annual crowns and velvet coat—

## *Columbus at Seville*

For veritable sight and news of land.  
The *Pinta* might outsail, the *Nina* balk  
Their Admiral. But still for him reserved  
The hour, and for his eyes the blessed light,  
The light on Guanahani! Musing there,  
Through the first watch, beside the cabin top,  
I heard between me and the hornèd moon  
A frigate-bird go whistling, and a wind  
Caught in the rigging like a woman's sigh:  
Wherat I turned——O face! O flash of eyes!  
O star of my devotion! all dissolved  
Into a spark that danced and disappeared,  
And dancing glowed again, as 'twere a torch  
Moved in a village street from door to door!  
I called the watch. They had not seen: but ran,  
Stared, saw—'Land! land!' and 'Praise the Admiral!  
Who found us light in darkness? Who but he?'  
—More proof? Then rede thee of that bitter gale  
Off the Azores, on the homeward road.  
The *Nina* drove alone in seas that drowned  
Hope and the very heaven. There we cast  
Lots who should carry—barefoot, in his sark—  
A candle to Our Lady of Guadelupe.  
Who drew the lot but I? Again we cast.  
And who but I the pilgrim to Moguer,  
To Santa Clara? Yea, yet once again  
A night of anguish off the Tagus mouth;

## *Columbus at Seville*

Again the lot; again the Admiral!  
Me must Our Lady of La Cinta choose:  
There was none other. Proofs? I tell thee, son,  
There was none other! These men handled ropes,  
Starved, hoped, shed tears—mechanical, for me  
Their master. As I meted them, they moved.  
But Pinzon—who betrayed me once and twice  
At Cuba—thought us foundered in the gale,  
Nor stayed to search; but made his hope, his shame,  
Both doubled by desertion—who, with sail  
Piled high as both, let drive the *Pinta* home  
To bear the first report and snatch the prize—  
I swear I pitied him. How like to mine  
His hope, if mine had lacked the single grace  
Made his contention impotent! lacking which,  
He smote upon a consecrated shield  
That on the stroke rang God's authentic 'No!'

Thou knowest how upon a mid-day tide  
We drew unto that port of our desire;  
To Palos, little Palos, left so long,  
After what wonders found! and all the roofs  
Rocked, and the mist of faces on the quay  
Heaved, and the anchor dropped, and home was home.  
Thou knowest how, that moment looking back,  
We saw a lean hull creeping past the bar—  
The *Pinta*!—never spoken since the Azores!

### *Columbus at Seville*

And Pinzon—traitor, by an hour too late!  
Always I pitied him. He had designed  
To post to Barcelona with the news:  
Now heard the royal mandate, 'Never come  
But with the Admiral thou shouldst have served.'  
Whereat he turned him to his native town,  
To his own house; there on the threshold pushed  
By wife and children, mounted to his room,  
And turned the key, and knew his hour, and died.

But *my* reward, how came it?

Proud enough  
That hour in Barcelona; the April sky  
Shaken with bells and cannon and flame of flags;  
The cheers, the craning heads, the blossoms thrown  
And kerchiefs from the windows fluttering,  
Flock after flock, like doves let forth to greet  
The dusty golden pageant—Juan first,  
The Pilot, with the Standard of Castile:  
The slow brown Indians in their feather cloaks  
And paint: the seamen bearing fruit and palms,  
Parrots and gold-fish, conchs and turtle-shells,  
Lizards on poles, lign-aloes, trays of spice,  
And gold in calabashes: last of all  
The Admiral. So, they led me to the throne,  
Where she and Ferdinand rose, as to a prince,  
And hardly would permit me kiss their hands:

### *Columbus at Seville*

But seated me beside them, bade me tell  
All our adventures—rarely smiled the Queen—  
'Yea, all,' she said. In the great circle's hush,  
Beneath the canopy of cloth-of-gold,  
I found my voice and spake—'Most Catholic King,  
And thou, Star-regent of our enterprise,  
Sooner than half were told, this April night  
Would shake the planets from her dusky wings  
Down-hovering. Yet an hour shall tell enough  
To tune all tongues to anthems praising God.'  
So for an hour I told the tale; and twice  
Paused: but insistent she commanded 'More!'  
Leaning with parted lip and kindling cheek,  
As might the Carthaginian, had no drought  
Of passion parched her throat, have leaned to drink  
Of Troy's immortal wanderer. Was it then  
Came my reward?

Not then, nor ever so.

But long years after, when that dream was grey,  
And the heart wise, and fellowship was none  
(For 'tis the curse of greatness, to outgrow  
All friends and from the lone height long for friends,  
And falling, find the friends it left all gone),  
—Years afterward, when black was favour's torch  
And faith took bribes; when Ferdinand betrayed,  
And Bobadilla, High Commissioner,

## *Columbus at Seville*

Foamed at his lunatic height, raged like a beast,  
Cast us in chains, shipped us like beeves to Spain—  
Then, from the pit of that most brutal fall  
A voice commanded 'Break his chains! He shall  
In person stand before us, plead his cause.'

Carefully then I dressed me as became  
The Admiral of the Ocean. Squire and page  
And retinue—I did abate no jot  
While the purse bled. A prince, and all a prince,  
I passed between the sneering chamber crowd,  
The whispering abjects of the ante-rooms,  
Into the presence: stood there, cold, erect.  
'I am Columbus. I have left my chains  
Nailed at my bed's head by the crucifix:  
And come to know what further, O my King?'  
Then Ferdinand—I saw him bite his lip—  
Sat with pink face averted. But the Queen  
Rose from her throne, silent—I would have knelt;  
Too late! She stretched her hands and, silent yet,  
Gazed, and the world fell from us, and we wept—  
We two, together . . .  
Ah, blessed hands! Ah, blessed woman's hands—  
Stretched to undo irreparable wrong!  
Yea, the more blest being all impotent!  
A Queen's I had not touched: but hers met mine  
In humbleness across man's common doom,  
In sadness and in wisdom beyond pride.

### *Columbus at Seville*

They are cold beside her now, and cannot stir.  
Further than I have travelled she hath fared:  
But I shall follow. Soon will come the call:  
And I shall grip the tiller once again.  
The purple night shall heave upon the floor  
Mile after mile; the dawn invade the stars,  
The stars the dawn—how long? And following down  
The moon's long ripple, I shall hear again  
The frigate-bird go whistling—see the flash—  
The light on Guanahani! Salvador!  
Let thy Cross flame upon me in that star,  
And from that Cross outstretch *her* sainted hands!

My son, they tell me that the Queen is gone . . .  
I trust she rests in glory, free from all  
The cares of this rough world. She was my friend:  
And I shall find it harder now to treat  
With Ferdinand. He fends me off with words.  
I thought that last petition ill prepared;  
And have an ampler one; drawn up and signed  
To-day, or yesterday—who knows? The blinds  
Are closed, and no sun moves upon the floor.

TO  
CHARLES THURSBY  
THE 'ONLIE BEGETTER'

THE REGENT  
A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CARL'ANTONIO, *Duke of Adria*

TONINO, *his young son*

LUCIO, *Count of Vallescura, brother to the Duchess*

CESARIO, *Captain of the Guard*

GAMBA, *a Fool*

OTTILIA, *Duchess and Regent of Adria*

LUCETTA, *a Lady-in-Waiting*

FULVIA, *a Lady of the Court*

*Courtiers, Priests, Choristers, Soldiers, Mariners,*

*Townsfolk, etc.*

*The Scene is the Ducal Palace of Adria, in the N. Adriatic*

*The Date, 1571*

## THE REGENT

SCENE.—*A terraced courtyard before the Ducal Palace. Porch and entrance of Chapel, R. A semicircular balcony, L., with balustrade and marble seats, and an opening whence a flight of steps leads down to the city. The city lies out of sight below the terrace; from which, between cypresses and statuary, is seen a straight stretch of a canal; beyond the canal are sand-hills and the line of the open sea. Mountains, L., dip down to the sea and form a curve of the coast.*

*As the curtain rises, a crowd of town and country folk is being herded to the back of the terrace by the Ducal Guard, under Cesario. Within the Chapel, to the sound of an organ, boys' voices are chanting the service of the Mass.*

*Cesario, Gamba the Fool, Guards, Populace.*

*Cesario.* Way there! Give room! The Regent comes from Mass.

Guards, butt them on the toes—way there! give room!

Prick me that laggard's leg—importunate fools!

*Guards.* Room for the Regent! Room!

[*The sacring bell rings within the Chapel.*

## *The Regent*

*Cesario.*

Hark there, the bell!

*[A pause. Men of the crowd take off their caps.*

Could ye not leave, this day of all the year,  
Your silly suits, petitions, quarrels, pleas?  
Could ye not leave, this once in seven years,  
Our Lady to come holy-quiet from Mass,  
Lean on the wall, and loose her cage-bird heart,  
To lift and breast and dance upon the breeze  
Draws home her lord the Duke?

*Crowd.*

Long live the Duke!

*Cesario.* The devil, then! Why darken his approach?

*Gamba* (*from the bench where he has been mending his viol*). Because, Captain, 'tis a property knaves and fools have in common—to stand in their own light, as 'tis of soldiers to talk bad logic. That knave, now—he with the red nose and the black eye—the Duke's colours, loyal man!—you clap an iron on his leg, and ask him why he is not down in the city, hanging them out of window! But there!—you are a soldier!

*Cesario.* And you a Fool, and on your own showing stand in your own light.

*Gamba.* Nay, neither in my own light, nor as a Fool. So should myself stand between the sun and my shadow; whereas I am not myself—these seven years have I been but the shadow of a Fool. Yet, to keep my hand in, must I practise this nonsense for which I draw my pay, and so purge my sick soul with surfeit

## *The Regent*

even in Confessional. Pah! (*To his viol*) But come, old limmer—frayed loyalty—we must tune up for the Duke! (*Strikes his viol and sings.*)

‘Bird of the South, my Rondinello——’

Flat—Flat!

*Cesario (calling up to watchman on the Chapel roof).* Ho, there! What news?

*A Voice.* Captain, no sail!

*Cesario.* Where sits  
The wind?

*Voice.* Nor' west, and north a point!

*Cesario.* Perchance  
They have down'd sail and creep around the flats.

*Gamba (tuning his viol).* Flats, flats! the straight horizon, and the life

These seven years laid by rule! The curst canal  
Drawn level through the drawn-out level sand  
And thistle-tufts that stink as soon as pluck'd!  
Give me the hot crag and the dancing heat,  
Give me the Abruzzi, and the cushioned thyme—  
Brooks at my feet, high glittering snows above.  
What were thy music, viol, without a ridge?

[*Noise of commotion in the city below.*

*Cesario.* Watchman, what news?

*A Voice.* Sir, on the sea no sail!

*One of the Crowd.* But through the town below a horse-man spurs—

## *The Regent*

I think, Count Lucio! Yes—Count Lucio!  
He nears, draws rein, dismounts!

*Cesario.* Sure, he brings news.  
*Gamba.* I think he brings word the Duke is sick; his  
loyal folk have drunk so much of his health.

[A murmur has been growing in the town below. It breaks into cheers as Count Lucio comes springing up to the terrace.

*Enter Lucio.*

*Lucio.* News! Where's the Regent? Eh? is Mass not said?

Cesario, news! I rode across the dunes;  
A pilot—Nestore—you know the man—  
Came panting. Sixteen sail beyond the point!  
That's not a galley lost!

*Crowd.* Long live the Duke!

*Lucio.* Hark to the tocsin! I have carried fire—

Wildfire! Why, where's my sister? I've a mind—  
[He strides towards the door of the Chapel; but pauses  
at the sound of chanting within, and comes back to  
Cesario.

Man, are you mute? I say the town 's aflame  
Below! But here, up here, you stand and stare  
Like prisoners loosed to daylight. Rub your eyes,  
Believe!

*Cesario (musing).* It has been long.

*Lucio.* As tapestry

## *The Regent*

Pricked out by women's needles; point-device  
As saints in fitted haloes. Yet they stab,  
Those needles. Oh, the devil take their tongues!

*Cesario.* Why, what's the matter?

*Lucio.* P'st! another lie

Against the Countess Fulvia; and the train  
Laid to my sister's ear. *Cesario*,  
My sister is a saint—and yet she married:  
Therefore should understand . . . Would saints, like  
c cobblers,  
Stick but to business in this naughty world!  
Ah, well! the Duke comes home.

*Cesario.* And what of that?

*Lucio.* Release!

*Cesario.* Release?

*Lucio* (*mocking a chant within the Chapel*). From priests  
and petticoats

Deliver us, Good Lord!

*Gamba* (*strikes a chord on viol*). *AMEN!*

*Cesario.* Count *Lucio*,  
These seven years agone, when the Duke sailed,  
You were a child—a pretty, forward boy;  
And I a young lieutenant of the Guard,  
Burning to serve abroad. But that day, rather,  
I clenched my nails over an inward wound:  
For that a something manlier than my years—  
Look, bearing, what-not—by the Duke not miss'd,

## *The Regent*

Condemned me to promotion: I must bide  
At home, command the Guard! 'Tis an old hurt,  
But scalded on my memory. . . . Well—they sailed!  
And from the terrace here, sick with self-pity,  
Wrapped in my wrong, forgetful of devoir,  
I watch'd them through a mist—turned with a  
sob—

Uptore my rooted sight—

There, there she stood;  
Her hand press'd to her girdle, where the babe  
Stirred in her body while she gazed—she gazed—  
But slowly back controlled her eyes, met mine;  
So—with how wan, how small, how brave a smile!—  
Reached me her hands to kiss . . .

O royal hands!

What burdens since they have borne let Adria tell.

But hear me swear by them, Count Lucio—

Who slights our Regent throws his glove to me.

*Lucio.* Why, soothly, she's my sister!

*Cesario.*

‘But the Court

Is dull? No masques, few banquetings—and prayers  
Be long, and youth for pastime leaps the gate?’

Yet if the money husbanded on feasts

Have fed our soldiery against the Turk,

Year after year, and still the State not starved;

Was't not well done? And if, responsible

To God, and lonely, she has leaned on God

## *The Regent*

Too heavily for our patience, was't not wise?—  
And well, though weary?

*Lucio.* I tell you, she's my sister!

*Cesario.* Well, an you will, bridle on that. Lord Lucio,  
You named the Countess Fulvia. To my sorrow,  
Two hours ago I called on her and laid her  
Under arrest.

*Lucio.* The devil! For what?

*Cesario.* For that  
A lady, whose lord keeps summer in the hills  
To nurse a gouty foot, should penalize  
His dutiful return by shutting doors  
And hanging out a ladder made of rope, .  
Or prove its safety by rehearsing it  
Upon a heavier man.

*Lucio.* I'll go to her.

Oh, this is infamous!

*Cesario.* Nay, be advised:  
No hardship irks the lady, save to sit  
At home and feed her sparrows; nor no worse  
Annoy than from her balcony to spy  
(Should the eye rove) a Switzer of the Guard  
At post between her raspberry-canés, to watch  
And fright the thrushes from forbidden fruit.

*Lucio.* Infamous! infamous!

*Cesario.* Enough, my lord:  
The Regent!

## *The Regent*

*[Doors of the Chapel open. The organ sounds, with voices of choir chanting the recessional. The Court enters from Mass, attending the Regent Ottilia and her son Tonino. She wears a crown and heavy dalmatic. Her brother Lucio, controlling himself, kisses her hand and conducts her to the marble bench, which serves for her Chair of State. She bows, receiving the homage of the crowd; but, after seating herself, appears for a few moments unconscious of her surroundings. Then, as her rosary slips from her fingers and falls heavily at her feet, she speaks.]*

*Regent.* So slips the chain linking this world with Heaven,

And drops me back to earth: so slips the chain  
That hangs my spirit to the Redeemer's cross  
Above pollution in the pure swept air  
Whereunder frets this hive: so slips the chain—  
(*She starts up*)—God! the dear sound! Was that his anchor dropped?

Speak to the watchman, one! Call to the watch!  
What news?

*Cesario.* Aloft! What news?

*Voice above.* No sail as yet!

*Regent.* Ah, pardon, sirs! My ears are strung to-day,  
And play false airs invented by the wind.  
Methought a hawse-pipe rattled . . .

## *The Regent*

*Gamba (chants to his viol).*      *Shepherds, see—*

*Shepherds, see—*

*Lo! What a mariner love hath made me!*

*Regent.* What chants the Fool?

Made by a silly poet on wives that stand  
All night at windows listening the surf—

*Now he comes! Will he come? Alas! no, no!*

*Lucio.* Peace, Lively! Madam, there is news—brave news!

I'm from the watch-house. There the pilots tell  
Of sixteen sail to the southward! Sixteen sail,  
And nearing fast!

*Regent.* Praise God! dear Lucio!

[She has seated herself again. She takes Lucio's hand and speaks, petting it.

What? Glowing with my happiness? That's like you.

But for yourself the hour, too, holds release.

*Lucio (between sullenness and shame, with a glance at Cesario). 'Release?'*

*Regent.* You will forgive? I have great need  
To be forgiven. Sadly I have been slack  
In guardianship, and by so much betrayed  
My promise to our mother's passing soul.  
Myself in cares immersed, I left the child  
Among his toys—and turn to find you man—  
But yet so much a boy that boyhood can

## *The Regent*

(*Wistfully*) Laugh in your honest eyes? Forgive me,  
Lucio!

Tell me, whate'er have slackened, there has slipped  
No knot of love. To-morrow we'll make sport,  
Be playmates and invent new games, and old—  
Wreath flowers for crowns—

[*He drags his hand away. She gazes at him wistfully, and turns to the Captain of the Guard.*]  
Cesario,

What are the suits?

*Cesario.* They are but three to-day,  
Madonna. First, a scoundrel here in irons  
For having struck the Guard.

*Regent (eyeing the culprit).* His name, I think,  
Is Donatello Crocco. Hey? You improve,  
Good man. The last time 'twas your wife you basted.  
At this rate, in another year or two  
You'll bang the Turk. Do you confess the assault?

*Prisoner.* I do.

*Regent.* Upon a promise we dismiss you.  
Your tavern, as it comes into our mind,  
Is the 'Three Cups.' So many, and no more,  
You'll drink to-day—have we your word? Three  
cups,

And each a *Viva* for the Duke's return.

*Prisoner.* Your Highness, I'll not take it at the price  
Of my good manners. I'm a gallant man:

## *The Regent*

And who in Adria calls 'Three cheers for the Duke!'  
But adds a fourth for the Duchess? Lady, nay;  
Grant me that fourth, or back I go to the cells!

[*The Regent laughs and nods to the Guard to release him.*

*Regent. What next?*

*An Old Woman (very rapidly).* Your Highness will not know me—Zia

Agnese, Giovannucci's wife that was;  
And feed a two-three cows, as a widow may,  
On the marshes where the grass is salt and sweet,  
As your Highness knows—and always true to pail  
Until this Nicolo——

*Nicolo.* Lies! lies, your Highness!

*Old Woman.* —having a quarrel, puts the evil eye

On Serafina. She 's my best of cows,  
In stall with calf but ten days weaned.

*Nicolo.* Lies! lies!

*Old Woman.* I would your Highness saw her! When  
that thief

Hangs upon Lazarus' bosom, he'll be bidding  
A ducat for each drop of milk he's cost me,  
To cool his tongue.

*Regent.* Ay—ay, the cow is sick,  
I think; and mind me, being country-bred,  
Of a cure for such: which is, to buy a comb  
And comb the sufferer's tail at feeding-time.

## *The Regent*

If Zia Agnese do but this, she'll counter  
The Evil Eye, and maybe with her own  
Detect who thieves her Serafina's hay.

*Old Woman.* }  
*Nicolo.* } God bless your Highness!

*Regent* (*taking up a fresh suit*). Why, what's here?  
'*Costanza*,

*Wife of Giuseppe Boni, citeth him*  
*And sueth to live separate, for neglect*  
*And divers beatings, as to wit——'* H'm, h'm—  
*'Likewise to keep the child Geronimo,*  
*Begotten of his body.'* You defend  
The suit, Giuseppe?

*A Young Peasant* (*shrugs his shoulders*). As the woman  
will!

I'll not deny I beat her.

*Regent.* But neglect!  
How came you to neglect her? Look on her—  
The handsome, frowsy slut, that, by appearance,  
Hath never washed her body since she wed.  
A beating we might pass. But how neglect  
To take her by the neck unto the pump  
And hold her till her wet and furious face  
Were once again worth kissing? Well—well—well!  
Neglect is proven. She shall have deserts:  
(*To a Clerk*) But—write, 'Defendant keeps his law-  
ful child.'

## *The Regent*

*Young Peasant.* My lady——

*Wife.* Nay, my lady——

*Regent.* Eh? What's this?

*Wife.* The poor *bambino*! Nay, 'twas not the suit!

How should Giuseppe, being a fool, a man——

*Young Peasant.* Aye, aye: that's sense. I love him: still,  
you see——

*Regent.* An if my judgment suit you not, go home,  
The pair! (*As they are going she calls the woman back.*)

Costanza! hath your husband erred  
With other woman?

*Young Peasant.* Never!

*Wife.* I'll not charge him  
With that.

*Regent.* But, yes, you may. This man hath held  
Another woman to his breast.

*Wife.* Her name!  
That I may tear her eyes!

*Regent.* Her name's Costanza.  
The same Costanza that, with body washed,  
With ribbon in her hair, light in her eyes,  
Arrayed a cottage to allure his heart.  
Go home, poor fools, and find her! . . .

Heigh! No others? [*Heaves a sigh.*]

Captain, dismiss the Guard. The watch, aloft—  
Set him elsewhere. We would not be o'erlooked.  
You only, Lucio—you, Lucetta—stay;

## *The Regent*

You for a while, Cesario.

[*Exeunt Courtiers, Guard, Crowd, etc.*

Heigh! that's over—

The last Court of the Regent; and the books,  
Accounts of stewardship, my seven years all,  
Closed here for audit.

Nay, there's one thing more—

Brother, erewhile I spoke you sisterly.

You turned away, and still you bite your lip:  
Signs that may short my preface. It concerns  
The Countess Fulvia.

*Lucio.*

Ha!

*Regent.*

Go, bring her, Captain.

[*Exit Cesario.*

List to me, Lucio: listen, brother dear,  
First playmate—child, tending whose innocence  
Myself learned motherhood. Shall I deny  
Youth to be loved and follow after love?  
There is a love breaks like a morning beam  
On the husht novice kneeling by his arms;  
And worse there is, whose kisses strangle love,  
Whose feet take hold of hell. My Lucio,  
Follow not that!

*Lucio.* Why, who—who hath maligned  
The Countess?

*Regent.* Not maligned. Lucetta, here—

*Lucio.* Lucetta! Curse Lucetta and her tongue!

## *The Regent*

Am I a child, to be nagged by waiting-maids?  
*Regent.* No, but a man, and shall weigh evidence.  
*Lucio.* But I'll not hear it! If her viper tongue  
Can kill, why kill it must. But send me a man,  
And I will smite his mouth—ay, slit his tongue—  
That dares defame the Countess!

*Regent.* Stay: she comes.

[Enter the Countess *Fulvia*, Cesario attending.

Madam, the reason wherefore you are summoned  
No doubt you guess, from a rude earlier call  
Our Captain paid you. Certain practices,  
Which you may force me name, are charged upon  
you

On testimony you may force me call  
And may with freedom question.

*Fulvia.* I'll not question:  
No, nor I will not answer.

*Lucio.* Then I'll answer!  
For me, for all, she is innocent!

*Regent.* For you?  
We'll hope it: but 'for all' 's more wide an oath  
Than you can swear, sir. I'll not bandy you  
Words nor debate. Myself the ladder saw;  
Lucetta, here, the ladder and the man.  
*What* man she will not say. Cesario  
Has tracked his footprint on her garden plots.  
Must we say more?

## *The Regent*

*Fulvia.* No need. Her fingering mind  
Is a close cupboard turning all things rancid.

*Lucio.* Yea, for such wry-necks all the world's a lawn  
To peek and peer and pounce a sinful worm;  
The fatter, the more luscious.

*Regent.* Lucio,  
This woman nought gainsays.

*Fulvia (fiercely).* As why should I?  
I'll question not, nor answer. 'Neath your brow  
My sentence hunches, crawls, like cat to spring.  
Pah! there's no prude will match your virtuous wife!  
You'd banish me?

*Regent.* I do. Cesario,  
See to it the City gate shuts not to-night,  
And she this side.

*Fulvia (laughs recklessly).* To-night? To-night's your  
own.

Most modest woman! Duchess, there's a well  
By the road, some seven miles beyond the town.  
There, 'neath the stars, I'll dip a hand and drink  
To the good Duke's disport. But have a care!  
That cup's not yet to lip.

*Regent.* Captain, remove her.  
Lucio, remain.

[*Exit the Countess Fulvia, Cesario following.*

*Lucio.* I'll not remain—When ice  
Sits judge of fire, what justice shall be done?

## *The Regent*

Sister, there be your books—peruse them. There  
The sea-line—bide you so with back to it.  
While the cold inward heat of cruelty  
Warms what was once your heart, now crusted o'er  
With duty and slimed with poisonous drip of tongues.  
God help the Duke, if what he left he'd find!

[*Exit Lucio.*

*Regent.* Is't so, I wonder? Go, Lucetta, fetch  
My glass, if haply I may tell.

[*Exit Lucetta.*

Is't so?

And have these years enforced, encrusted me  
To something monstrous, neither woman nor man?  
My lord, my lord! too heavy was the load  
You laid! Yet I'll not blame you: for myself  
Ruled the straight path, the long account correct  
As in these books, my ledgers....

[*While she turns the pages, Gamba the Fool creeps in and hoists himself on the balustrade. He tries his viol, and sings.*

### SONG: *Gamba.*

Bird of the South, my Rondinello—  
*Regent.* Hey? That Song!  
*Gamba.* Hie to me, fly to me, steel-blue mate!  
Under my breast-knot flutters thy fellow;  
Here can I rest not, and thou so late.

## *The Regent*

Home, to me, home!  
'Love, love, I come!'  
—Dear one, I wait!

*Quanno nacesti tu, nacqui pur io:  
La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!*

You know the song, madonna?  
*Regent.* Ay, fool. Sit  
Here at my feet, sing on.

*Gamba (sings).*

Tell of my love, my Rondinello,  
Under whose wing my heart hath lain,  
What land delays him, dear nest-fellow?

Daulian woodland, Libyan plain.

'Wait, my love, wait!'

Ah, desolate!

Ah, love, the pain!

*Addio, addio! ed un' altra vol' addio!*

*La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!*

(Pause).

A foolish rustic thing the shepherd wives  
In our Abruzzi croon, by winter fires,  
Of their husbands in the plains.

*Regent.* Gamba!  
*Gamba.* Madonna?  
*Regent.* I'd make thee my confessor. Mindest thou,  
By Villalago, where from Sanno's lake

## *The Regent*

The stream, our Tasso, hurls it down the glen?  
One noon, with Lucio—ever in those days  
With Lucio—on a rock within the spray,  
I wove a ferny garland, while the boy  
Roamed, but returned in triumph, having trapped  
A bee in a bell-flower—held it to my ear,  
Laughing, dissembling that he feared to loose  
The hairy thief. So laughed we—and were still,  
As deep in Vallescura wound a horn,  
And up the pathway 'neath the dappling bough  
Came riding—flecked with sunshine, man and  
horse,—

My lord, my lover; and that song, that song  
Upon his lips. . . .

*Voice of Watchman.*      Sail ho! a sail! a sail!

[Murmur of populace below. It grows and swells to a roar as enter hurriedly courtiers, guards, and others: Cesario; Lucetta with mirror.

*Lucetta.* My lady! O my lady!—

*Cesario.* See, they near!

Galley on galley—look, there, by the point!

*Regent.* O, could my heart keep tally with the surge  
That here comes crowding!

*Lucetta.* Joy, my lady! Joy!

*All. Joy! Joy, my lady!*

[They press flowers on her. A pause, while they watch. On the canal the galleys come into sight.

## *The Regent*

*They near: and as the oars rise and fall, the rowers' chorus is borne from the distance. It is the Rondinello song.*

*Chorus in distance. La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!*

*Regent.* Thanks, my good, good friends!

And deem it not discourteous if alone  
I'd tune my heart to bliss.

My glass, Lucetta!

[*Takes mirror.*

Some thoughts there are—some thoughts—

*Courtiers.* God save you, madam!

[*They go out, leaving the Regent alone.*

*Regent* (*she loosens the clasp of her robe*). Some thoughts  
—some thoughts—

Fall from me, envious robe!

Rest there, my crown—thou more than leaden ache!

Ah!—

God! What a mountain drops! I float—I am lifted  
Like thistledown on nothing. Back, my crown—  
Weight me to earth! Nay, nay, thy rim shall bite  
No more upon this forehead . . . Where's my glass?  
O mirror, mirror, hath it bit so deep?

My love is coming, hark! O, say not grey,  
Sweet mirror! Tell, what time to cure it now?  
And he so near, so near!

How shall I meet him?

Why how but as the river leaps to sea,

## *The Regent*

Steel to its magnet, child to mother's arms?

*[She catches up flowers from the baskets left by the courtiers, and decks herself wildly.*

Flowers for my hair, flowers at the breast! Sweet flowers,

He'll crush you 'gainst his corslet. He has arms

Like bands of iron for clasping, has my love.

He'll hurt, he'll hurt . . . But oh, sweet flowers, to lie  
And feel you helpless while he grips and bruises

Your weak protesting breasts! You'll die in bliss,  
Panting your fragrance out.—

Wh'st! Hush, poor fool!

I have unlearned love's very alphabet.

Men like us coy, demure . . . Then I'll coquet  
And play Madam Dissain—but not to-day.

To-morrow I'll be shrewish, shy, perverse,  
Exacting, cold—all April in my moods:

We'll walk the forest, and I'll slip from him,  
Hide me like Dryad 'mid the oaks, and mark

His hot dark face pursuing; or I'll couch

In covert green, and hold my breath to hear  
His blundering foot go by; then up I'll leap,

And run—and he'll run after. O this lightness!

I'll draw him like a fairy, dance and double—  
Yet not so fast but he shall overtake

At length, and catch me panting. O, I charge you,  
I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem,

## *The Regent*

Wake not my love beneath the forest bough  
Where we lie dreaming!

[*Fanfare of trumpets in the distance.*

Trumpets, hark! and drums!

They have landed! From the quay they march!  
Flowers! flowers!

They are near . . . I see him! . . . Carlo! lord and  
love!

He looks—waves—O 'tis he! O foolish heart!—  
I had feared he'd ta'en a wound.

What is't they shout?

Eh? 'Victory!'—yes, yes. He 's browner, thinner;  
And the dear eyes, how gaunt! . . . Yes, 'Victory!'  
'Victory!' . . . lord, and love! . . .

[*The shouts of acclamation are heard now close under  
the terrace. Spears and banners are seen trooping  
past. Beside herself, she throws flowers to them,  
laughing, weeping the while. Then, running to the  
Chapel door, she throws herself before the image  
of the Virgin that crowns its archway.*

O Mary, Mother!

Thou, in whose breast all women's thoughts have  
moved,

All woman's passions heaved. Lo! I adore!

Sweet Mother, hold my hands, rejoice with me:  
My bridegroom cometh!

[*During this invocation the Countess Fulvia has crept*

## *The Regent*

*in, a stiletto in her hand. She leans over the Regent, drags her backward by the hair, and stabs her twice in the breast.*

*Fulvia.* Then with that!—and that!

Go meet him!

*Regent (turns, looks up, and falls on her face).*

Oh! I am slain!

*Fulvia.* And I am worse!

But there's my red flower, on your wifely breast.—

Wife, meet your lord and show it!

[She passes down the steps as *Lucetta* runs in.

*Lucetta.* Madam! Madam!

The Duke is at the gate—Madam!—

Christ! she is murdered! Murder! Murder!

*Regent.* Fie,

Lucetta! peace! What word to greet the Duke

For his home-coming! Lift me... Quick, my robe—

My Crown! Call no one. O, but hasten!

*Lucetta (helpless, wringing her hands).* Madam!

*Regent.* I need your strength, and must I steady you?

Lucetta, years ago you disarrayed me

Upon my bridal night. I would you'd whisper

The rouqueries your tongue invented then.

I have few moments, girl... I'd have them wanton.

Make jest this mantle hides the maid I was.

I'll have no priest, no doctor—Fetch Tonino!

I must present his son—

## *The Regent*

[*Lucetta runs out.*

All's acted quick:

Bride-bed, conception, birth—and death! But he  
Shall sum it in one moment death not takes . . .  
What noise of trumpets! . . . Is the wound not  
covered?

[She wraps herself carefully in her mantle as the courtiers pour in. The child Tonino runs to her and stands by her side. Lucio, Cesario, all the Court, group themselves round her as the Duke enters. He rushes in eagerly; but she sets her teeth on her anguish, and receives him with a low reverence.

Welcome my lord!

*Duke.* Ottilia!

*Regent.* Good my lord,

Welcome! This day is bright restores you to  
Your loyal Duchy.

*Regent (she lifts a hand to keep him at distance).*

There must be forms, my lord—some forms! Cesario,

Render the Duke his sceptre. As bar to socket,  
When the gate closes on a town secure,  
So locks this rod back to his manly clutch—  
Cry all, 'Long live the Duke!'

All. Long live the Duke!

## *The Regent*

*Duke.* Wife, make an end with forms!

*Lucio (to Cesario).* And so say I!

A man would think my sister had no blood  
In her body.

*Cesario (watching the Regent).* Peace, man: something  
there's amiss.

*Regent.* Yet here is he that sceptre shall inherit.

Lucetta, lead his first-born to the Duke.  
His first-born!—Nay but look on him how straight  
Of limb, how set and shoulder-square, tho' slender!  
He'll sit a horse, in time, and toss a lance  
Even with his father.

*Duke.* There's my blessing, boy!

But stand aside. Look in my face, Ottilia—  
Hearken me, all! One thing these seven years  
My life hath lacked, which wanting, all your cannon,  
Your banners, *vivas*, bells that rock the roofs,  
Throng'd windows, craning faces—all—all—all  
Were phantasms, were noise.—

*Lucio (exclaims).* Why look, here's blood!

Here, on the boy's hand!

*Regent.* Ay! a scratch, no worse,  
Here, when I pinned my robe.

*Duke (continuing).* Nay, friends, this moment  
My Duchy her dear hand restores to me  
To me's a dream. More buoyant would I tread  
Dumb street, deserted square, climb ruin'd wall,

## *The Regent*

Where in a heap beneath a broken flag

Lay Adria—

So that amid the ruins stood my love

And stretched her hands so faintly—stretched her hands

So faintly. See! She's mine! She lifts them—

*Regent (totters and falls into his arms with a tired, happy laugh, which ends in a cry as his arms enfold her).*

Ah!

[*She faints.*

*Duke (after a moment, releasing her a little).* What's here? ... Ottilia!

*Lucetta.* My mistress swoons!

*A Courtier.* 'Tis happiness—

*Duke.* Fetch water!

*Lucio.* Nay this blood—

Came of no scratch!

*Lucetta.* Loosen her bodice—

*Duke.* Blood?

Why blood? Where's blood?

(*Stares as the mantle is unclasped and falls open).*

Ah, my God!

*Lucetta.* Murder! murder!

The Countess Fulvia—

*Cesario.* Speak!

*Lucetta.* There—while she knelt—

Stabbed her, and fled.

## *The Regent*

*Cesario.* Which way?

[*Lucetta points to the stairs. He dashes off in pursuit.*

*Duke.* All-seeing God!

Where were thine eyes, or else thy justice? Dead?

O, never dead!

*Lucio.* Ay, Duke, push God aside,

As I push thee. I have the better right:

I killed her—I! O never pass, sweet soul,

Till thou hast drunk a shudder of this wretch,

Thy brother, playmate, murderer!

*Duke.* Wine! bring wine—

*Regent (as the wine is brought and revives her).*

Flower, he will crush thee—but the bliss, the bliss!

I swim in bliss. What... Lucio? Where's my lord?

Dear, bring him: he was here awhile and held me.

Say he must hold, or the light air will lift

And bear me quite away.

[*Re-enter Cesario. In one hand he carries his sword, in the other a dagger.*

*Lucio.* Cesario!

What! Is that devil escaped? To think—to think

I drank her kisses!—What? Where is she?

*Cesario.* Dead.

I raised the cry: the people pointed after;

Ran with me, ravening. Just this side the bridge

She heard our howl and turned—drew back the  
dagger

## *The Regent*

Red with our lady's blood, then drove it home  
Clean . . .

*Regent.* God pardon her!

I would what blood of mine clung to the blade  
Might mix with hers and sweeten it for mercy.

*Lucio.* Will you forgive her? Then forgive not me!

*Regent.* Dear Lucio!—You'll not pluck away your hand  
This time? Hush! Where's Cesario? . . . Friend,  
farewell.

Where lies the body?

*Cesario.* Sooth, madonna, I flung it  
To the river's will, to roll it down to sea  
Or cast on muddy bar, for dogs to gnaw.

*Regent.* The river? Ah! How strong the river rolls!  
Hold me, my lord—

*Duke.* Love, love, I hold you!

*Regent.* —Ay!  
The child, too—You will hold the child?...  
This roar  
Deafens but will not drown us.

[Within the Chapel the choir is chanting. Gamba goes and closes the door on the sound: then creeps to the foot of the couch. The dying woman gently motions aside the cross a priest is holding to her, and looks up at her husband.

[Below the terrace a voice is heard singing the Ron-dinello song.

## *The Regent*

Look! beyond

Be waters where no galley moves with oar,  
So wide, so waveless,—and, between the woods,  
Meadows—O land me there! . . . Hark, my lord's  
voice

Singing in Vallescura! Soft, my love,  
I am so tired—so tired! Love, let me play!

[*Dies.*

*[The Courtiers lift the body in silence and bear it to the Chapel, the Duke and his train following. The doors close on them. On the stage are left only Cesario, standing by the balustrade; and Gamba, who has seated himself with his viol and touches it, as still the voice sings below—*

Addio, Addio! ed un'altra volt'addio!  
La lundananza tua, 'l desiderio mio!

*[On the last note a string of the viol cracks, and with a cry the Fool flings himself on the empty couch. Cesario steps forward and stands over him, touching his shoulder gently.*



## TRANSLATIONS

## THE VIGIL OF VENUS

THE *Pervigilium Veneris*—of unknown authorship, but clearly belonging to the late literature of the Roman Empire—has survived in two MSS., both preserved at Paris in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

Of these two MSS. the better written may be assigned (at earliest) to the close of the seventh century; the other (again at earliest) to the close of the ninth. Both are corrupt; the work of two illiterate copyists who—strange to say—were both smatterers enough to betray their little knowledge by converting *Pervigilium* into *Per Virgilium* (*scilicet*, 'by Virgil'): thus helping us to follow the process of thought by which the Middle Ages turned Virgil into a wizard. Here and there the texts become quite silly, separately or in consent; and just where they agree in the most surprising way—*i. e.* in the arrangement of the lines—the conjectural emendator is invited to do his worst by a note at the head of the older Codex, 'Sunt vero versus xxii'—'There are rightly twenty-two lines.'

This has started much ingenious guess-work. But no really convincing rearrangement has been achieved as yet; and I have been content to take the text pretty well as it stands, with a few corrections upon which most scholars agree. With a poem of 'paratactic structure' the best of us may easily go astray by transposing lines, or blocks of lines, to correspond with *our* sequence of thought; and I shall be content if, following the only texts to which appeal can be made,<sup>1</sup> my translation be generally intelligible.

It runs pretty closely, line for line, with the original; because

<sup>1</sup> Facsimiles of the two Codices can be studied in a careful edition of the *Pervigilium* by Sir Cecil Clementi, published by Mr. B. H. Blackwell of Oxford, 1911.

## *The Vigil of Venus*

one may love and emulate classical terseness even while despairing to rival it. But it does not attempt to be literal; for even were it worth doing, I doubt if it be possible for any one in our day to hit precisely the note intended by an author or heard by a reader in the eighth century. Men change subtly as nations succeed to nations, religions to religions, philosophies to philosophies; and it is a property of immortal poetry to shift its appeal. It does not live by continuing to mean the same thing. It grows as we grow. We smile, for instance, when some interlocutor in a dialogue of Plato takes a line from the *Iliad* and applies it seriously *au pied de la lettre*. We can hardly conceive what the great line conveyed to him; but it may mean something equally serious to us, though in a different way.

## PERVIGILIUM VENERIS

**C**RAS amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.

Ver novum, ver jam canorum, vere natus orbis est;

Vere concordant amores, vere nubunt alites,

Et nemus comam resolvit de maritis imbribus.

Cras amorum copulatrix inter umbras arborum

5

Implicat casas virentes de flagello myrteo:

Cras Dione jura dicit fulta sublimi throno.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Tunc liquore de superno spumeo et ponti globo,

Cærulas inter catervas, inter et bipedes equos,

10

Fecit undantem Dionen de maritis imbribus.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

## THE VIGIL OF VENUS

**T**O-MORROW—*What news of to-morrow?*

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have loved, love anew!*

It is Spring, it is chorussing Spring; 'tis the birthday of Earth, and for you!

It is Spring; and the Loves and the birds wing together and woo to accord

Where the bough to the rain has unbraided her locks as a bride to her lord.

For she walks—she our Lady, our Mistress of Wed-lock—the woodlands atween, 5

And the bride-bed she weaves them, with myrtle en-lacing, with curtains of green.

Look aloft! list the law of Dione, sublime and enthroned in the blue:

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have loved, love anew!*

Time was that a rain-cloud begat her, impregnning the heave of the deep,

'Twixt hooves of sea-horses a-scatter, stampeding the dolphins as sheep. 10

Lo! arose of that bridal Dione, rainbow'd and besprent of its dew!

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have loved, love anew!*

*The Vigil of Venus*

Ipsa gemmis purpurantem pingit annum floribus,

Ipsa surgentes papillas de Favoni spiritu

Urget in toros tepentes; ipsa roris lucidi

15

Noctis aura quem relinquit, spargit umentes aquas.

Et micant lacrimæ trementes de caduco pondere:

Gutta præceps orbe parvo sustinet casus suos.

En, pudorem florulentæ prodiderunt purpuræ:

Umor ille quem serenis astra rorant noctibus

20

Mane virgineas papillas solvit umenti peplo.

Ipsa jussit mane ut udæ virgines nubant rosæ;

Fusa Paphies de cruore deque Amoris osculis

Deque gemmis deque flammis deque solis purpuris,

Cras ruborem qui latebat veste tectus ignea

25

### *The Vigil of Venus*

She, she, with her gem-dripping finger enamels the  
wreath of the year;  
She, she, when the maid-bud is nubile and swelling,  
winds—whispers anear,  
Disguising her voice in the Zephyr's—'So secret the  
bed! And thou shy?' 15  
She, she, thro' the hush'd humid Midsummer night  
draws the dew from on high;  
Dew bright with the tears of its origin, dew with its  
weight on the bough,  
Misdoubting and clinging and trembling—'Now, now  
must I fall? Is it now?'  
Star-fleck'd on the stem of the brier as it gathers and  
falters and flows,  
Lo! its trail runs a ripple of fire on the nipple it bids be  
a rose, 20  
Yet englobes it diaphanous, veil upon veil in a tiffany  
drawn  
To bedrape the small virginal breasts yet unripe for the  
spousal of dawn;  
Till the vein'd very vermeil of Venus, till Cupid's in-  
carnadine kiss,  
Till the ray of the ruby, the sunrise, ensanguine the  
bath of her bliss;  
Till the wimple her bosom uncover, a tissue of fire to  
the view, 25

*The Vigil of Venus*

Unico marita nodo non pudebit solvere.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Ipsa nymphas diva luco jussit ire myrteo:

It puer comes puellis. Nec tamen credi potest

Esse Amorem feriatum, si sagittas vexerit. 30

Ite, nymphæ, posuit arma, feriatus est Amor;

Jussus est inermis ire, nudus ire jussus est,

Neu quid arcu, neu sagitta, neu quid igne læderet;

Sed tamen nymphæ cavete, quod Cupido pulcher est;

Est in armis totus idem quando nudus est Amor! 35

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Conpari Venus pudore mittit ad te virgines:

Una res est quam rogamus: cede, virgo Delia,

## *The Vigil of Venus*

And the zone o'er the wrists of the lover slip down as  
they reach to undo.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew!*

‘Go, maidens,’ Our Lady commands, ‘while the myrtle  
is green in the groves,

Take the Boy to your escort.’ ‘But ah!’ cry the maidens,  
‘what trust is in Love’s

Keeping holiday too, while he weareth his archery,  
tools of his trade?’ 30

‘Go! he lays them aside, an apprentice released; ye may  
wend unafraid.

See, I bid him disarm, he disarms; mother-naked I bid  
him to go,

And he goes mother-naked. What flame can he shoot  
without arrow or bow?’

Yet beware ye of Cupid, ye maidens! Beware most of  
all when he charms

As a child: for the more he runs naked, the more he’s a  
strong man-at-arms. 35

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew!*

‘Lady Dian’—Behold how demurely the damsels ap-  
proach her and sue—

‘Hear Venus her only petition! Dear maiden of Delos,  
depart!

*The Vigil of Venus*

Ut nemus sit incruentum de ferinis stragibus.

Ipsa vellet ut venires, si deceret virginem: 40

Jam tribus choros videres feriatos noctibus

Congreges inter catervas ire per saltus tuos,

Floreas inter coronas, myrteas inter casas:

Nec Ceres nec Bacchus absunt, nec poetarum Deus;

De tenente tota nox est perviglanda canticis: 45

Regnet in silvis Dione; tu recede, Delia.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Jussit Hyblæis tribunal stare diva floribus;

Præses ipsa jura dicit, adsederunt Gratiæ.

Hybla, totos funde flores quidquid annus adtulit; 50

Hybla, florum rumpe vestem quantus *Ætnæ* campus est.

### *The Vigil of Venus*

Let the forest be bloodless to-day, unmolested the roe  
and the hart!

Holy huntress, thyself she would bid be her guest,  
could thy chastity stoop 40

To approve of our revels, our dances—three nights  
that we weave in a troop

Arm-in-arm thro' thy sanctu'ries whirling, till faint and  
dispersed in the grove

We lie with thy lilies for chaplets, thy myrtles for ar-  
bours of love:

And Apollo, with Ceres and Bacchus to chorus—song,  
harvest, and wine—

Hymns thee dispossess'd, “’Tis Dione who reigns! Let  
Diana resign!” 45

O, the wonderful nights of Dione! dark bough, with  
her star shining thro’!

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew!*

She has set up her court, has Our Lady, in Hybla, and  
deckt it with blooms:—

With the Graces at hand for assessors Dione dispenses  
her dooms.

Now burgeon, O Hybla! put forth and abound, till  
Proserpina's field 50

To the foison thy lap overflowing its laurel of Sicily  
yield.

*The Vigil of Venus*

Ruris hic erunt puellæ, vel puellæ montium,

Quæque silvas, quæque lucos, quæque fontes incolunt:

Jussit omnes adsidere mater alitis dei,

Jussit et nudo puellas nil Amori credere. 55

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Et rigentibus virentes dicit umbras floribus:

Cras erit quum primus Æther copulavit nuptias,

Et pater totum creavit vernis annum nubibus.

In sinum maritus imber fluxit almæ conjugis, 60

Unde fetus mixtus omnes aleret magno corpore.

Ipsa venas atque mentem permeanti spiritu

Intus occultis gubernat procreatrix viribus,

Perque cœlum, perque terras, perque pontum subditum

### *The Vigil of Venus*

Call, assemble the nymphs—hamadryad and dryad—  
the echoes who court

From the rock, who the rushes inhabit, in ripples who  
swim and disport.

'I admonish you maids—I, his mother, who suckled  
the scamp ere he flew—

An ye trust to the Boy flying naked, some pestilent  
prank ye shall rue.' 55

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew!*

She has coax'd her the shade of the hazel to cover the  
wind-flower's birth,

Since the day the Great Father begat it, descending in  
streams upon Earth;

When the Seasons were hid in his loins, and the Earth  
lay recumbent, a wife,

To receive in the searching and genital shower the soft  
secret of life. 60

As the terrible thighs drew it down, and conceived, as  
the embryo ran

Thoro' blood, thoro' brain, and the Mother gave all to  
the making of man,

She, she, our Dione, directed the seminal current to  
creep,

Penetrating, possessing, by devious paths all the height,  
all the deep.

*The Vigil of Venus*

Pervium sui tenorem seminali tramite

65

Inbuit, jussitque mundum nosse nascendi vias.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Ipsa Trojanos nepotes in Latinos transtulit,

Ipsa Laurentem puellam conjugem nato dedit;

Moxque Marti de sacello dat pudicam virginem; 70

Romuleas ipsa fecit cum Sabinis nuptias,

Unde Ramnes et Quirites proque prole posterum

Romuli matrem crearet et nepotem Cæsarem.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Rura fecundat voluptas: rura Venerem sentiunt: 75

Ipse Amor puer Dionæ rure natus dicitur.

### *The Vigil of Venus*

She, of all procreation procress, the share to the fur-  
row laid true; 65

She, she, to the womb drove the knowledge, and open'd  
the ecstasy through.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew!*

Her favour it was fill'd the sail of the Trojan for Latium  
bound;

Her favour that won her Æneas a bride on Laurentian  
ground,

And anon from the cloister inveigled the Virgin, the  
Vestal, to Mars; 70

As her wit by the wild Sabine rape recreated her Rome  
for its wars,

With the Ramnes, Quirites, together ancestrally proud  
as they drew

From Romulus down to our Cæsar—last, best of that  
bone, of that thew.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew!*

Pleasure planteth a field; it conceives to the passion, the  
pang, of his joy. 75

In a field was Dione in labour delivered of Cupid the  
Boy;

*The Vigil of Venus*

Hunc ager, cum parturiret ipsa, suscepit sinu:

Ipsa florum delicatis educavit osculis.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

Ecce jam super genestas explicant tauri latus, 80

Quisque tutus quo tenetur conjugali fœdere:

Subter umbras cum maritis ecce balantum greges;

Et canoras non tacere diva jussit alites.

Jam loquaces ore rauco stagna cycni perstrepunt;

Adsonat Terei puella subter umbram populi, 85

Ut putes motus amoris ore dici musico,

Et neges queri sororem de marito barbaro.

Illa cantat, nos tacemus. Quando ver venit meum?

Quando fiam uti chelidon, ut tacere desinam?

## *The Vigil of Venus*

And the field in its fostering lap from her travail received him: he drew  
Mother's milk from the delicate kisses of flowers; and he prosper'd and grew—  
*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have loved, love anew!*

Lo! behold ye the bulls, with how lordly a flank they besprawl on the broom!— 80

Yet obey the uxorious yoke, and are tamed to Dione her doom.

Or behear ye the sheep, to the husbanding rams how they bleat to the shade!

Or behear ye the birds, at the Goddess' command how they sing unafraid!

Be it harsh as the swannery's clamour that shatters the hush of the lake,

Be it dulcet as where Philomela holds darkling the poplar awake, 85

So melting her soul into music, you'd vow 'twas her passion, her own,

She plaineth—her sister forgot, with the Daulian crime long-agone.

Hark! Hush! Draw around to the circle . . . Ah, loitering Summer! Say when

For me shall be broken the charm, that I chirp with the swallow again?

*The Vigil of Venus*

Perdidi Musam tacendo, nec me Apollo respicit; 90

Sic Amyclas, cum tacerent, perdidit silentium.

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit cras amet.*

### *The Vigil of Venus*

I am old; I am dumb; I have waited to sing till Apollo  
withdrew— 90

So Amyclæ a moment was mute, and for ever a wilder-  
ness grew.

*Now learn ye to love who loved never—now ye who have  
loved, love anew,*

*To-morrow!—to-morrow!*

## HESIOD'S WINTER

WORKS AND DAYS, 504-563

**A**ROINT the January month! the bad days fit to skin  
An ox alive, the bitter frosts, yea, bitterer than sin:  
When Boreas blows across the heath, and thro' the  
herds of horse  
That range and crop the Thracian heaths he buffets  
down in force  
On the spread sea, and heaves it high, and field and  
forest howl  
As fierce on topping oak he falls, on screen of pine afoul,  
And smashes them in mountain glens flat on their nur-  
sery ground,  
While mile on mile thro' echoing wood runs panic of  
the sound:  
And shuddering beasties tuck their tails beneath their  
hinder parts,  
Yet shag nor fur on breast or rump defeat his icy darts.  
He pierces past the bullock's hide, unhindered on he  
goes  
Clean thro' the goat's cuirass of hair; only in vain his  
blows  
Rain on the sheep; their heavy pelts defeat him—*they'll*  
not feel.  
But any old rheumatic man he'll bend like any wheel!

## *Hesiod's Winter*

There's some one else despises him—the tender maid  
    who stays

Indoors, her mother mothering, and knows not yet the  
    ways

Of Aphrodite, wedlock-ripe, but keeps her body clean,  
Anointed, tucked in inner room the blankets warm be-  
    tween.

Corners there be for winter days! So think of her and  
    then

Think on the famished cuttlefish that in his fireless den  
Gnaws his own foot: for him no food the partial Sun  
    provides

That thro' midwinter to and fro o'er *Æthiopia* rides  
And warms the dingy African—but creeps an insect  
    pace

Ere spreads it north to shine upon the wide Hellenic race.

Thus miserably scatters all the wild-wood, deer and  
    hare,

With chattering teeth, 'cross holt and heath, and all to  
    find a lair,

All of a mind some den to find, to huddle down and  
    hutch

Against the cold that kills the old man pegging with his  
    crutch,

Snow-strayed, two-doubled, shielding eyes his window-  
    light to find. . . .

## *Hesiod's Winter*

Against this season then, if wise, you'll wear a jerkin  
lined,

A tunic reaching to your knees almost, with plenty  
knap:

Fat as a flea to snug therein, to tramp and care no rap  
For weather; not the worst can raise a goose-flesh on  
your skin.

*Item*, a pair of rawhide boots well stuffed of felt within:

*Item*—against the frost a sound specific 'tis to tack

A pair of kid-skins edge to edge with thongs. They  
warm the back

And turn the rain, you'd hardly think! *Item*, a close felt  
cap

With wind-guards wide and closely tied o'er either ear  
a flap

'Gainst Boreas when he swoops and drives the morning  
damp to spread

O'er fold and field, in time to yield us souls our daily  
bread.

Good luck! The gods are over us: but how this blessed  
juice

Sucks up from earth to fall again and nourish us, by  
Zeus

If I can make that out! Yet sure at night it turns to  
rain,

And then, with just a fetch to North, the muck comes  
back again!

*Hesiod's Winter*

Get home before the beggar starts: beware of him:  
don't let  
Him catch and drench and soak you till thro' shirt and  
skin you're wet.

Plague on this January month! as hard on beast as  
wights!

Cut down your cattle-fodder—feed your belly 'gainst  
the nights—

That's my advice—and carry on and see the nuisance  
through:

So wait upon the Equinox to fetch the circle true,  
And trust your Mother Earth her various fruitage to  
renew.

THE HOMERIC HYMN  
TO THE DELIAN APOLLO

I

I SHALL remember—how can I forget?—  
Apollo, the great Archer, as he strode  
First adown Zeus's hall, and all asweat  
Upstarted every god  
With terror of that bowstring taut and shining.

Leto alone, divining,  
Stood by the Thunderer, calm. The gear she took  
From the lad's shoulder, all the sling undid,  
Let slack the cord, shut down the quiver's lid,  
Hung bow and quiver on one golden hook  
Against a pillar of his father's house:  
Then to the high throne led him up.—  
And Zeus his father, tendering a cup  
Of nectar, heavenly juice,  
Bade his son welcome and the gods carouse.  
So the Immortals sat them down again  
And noisy pledged the twain—  
Father and son, with Leto—Leto fain  
Sith she had borne this archer-child to Zeus.

II

How shall I praise him fully or aright,  
To whom all fields of song allotted are?  
Of whom the mainland pastures breathe delight  
To isle on isle afar?

## *The Homeric Hymn*

Whose is the upland, whose the crag above,  
Flowering, whose is the stream cascading down  
To wed the sea in any tidal cove  
That holds a steep-to beach, a tiny fishing town?

### III

Shall I recount how Leto bare thee, first,  
Charmer of souls?—there as she fell forspent  
On Cythnus, on the side of Delos rent  
This way and that way, as the loud wind went  
And from the continent  
Captain'd the black wave on the cliff to burst.

### IV

There was thy birth: yet thou art lord of all  
The isles, and all the folk their surges bound,  
Or whom the gate and wall  
Of mainland cities tall.—  
Crete, Athens or Eubœa, most renown'd  
For ships, Ægina small.  
And Peparethus, sea-wash'd roods of ground:  
Ægæ, Eiresiae, Pelion's ragged peak,  
Athos of Thrace and Samos Thracian eke,  
Scyros, Phocaea—Ida shadowy  
With pine forest—clear-cut Autocané,  
Fair-established Imbros, Lemnos bleak,  
Where for landing's far to seek;  
Æolian Lesbos, royal throne

## *The Homeric Hymn*

Then, when he, taking into eyes new-born,  
Sunlight and sense of my so barren isle,  
    In discontent  
        And sudden infant scorn,  
Spurned me so deep in sea—so near a mile—  
That over me for ever should the strong  
Wave wash—and over me his heel should pass  
To blither temples leafier groves among:  
    And I should lie, alas !  
        Plunged by that heel,  
A nest for the sea-urchin, and the seal  
Dive thro' my caverns free, because  
    There man no longer was ...  
Yet, an thou willest give me oath, Divine,  
That I be first for men Apollo's shrine,  
    And last to abide  
His oracle, so be it ! I am thine  
And his, whose honour certes shall be wide.'

## VIII

Then Leto, answering, sware the gods' great oath.—  
'Earth and wide Heaven above, hear ye my troth,  
And Styx that everlasting runs below,  
Bind ye the most dread vow a god can owe.—  
I charge me that Apollo's altar stand  
Here, and a fragrant garth, and that, for both,  
    Delos have honour over every land.'

## *The Homeric Hymn*

### IX

Thus sworn, the oath was act.—  
And Delos seal'd the pact,  
And, for Apollo, blithely her received.  
But Leto joyed not: for her loins were rack'd  
    Nine nights and days—her body heaved  
In desperate pangs—till, summoned by her groaning,  
    Dione came,  
Rhea, Ichnaea; Themis closed her claim,  
Grey Amphitrité left her caverns moaning,  
And goddesses innumerable to name  
Ring'd Leto round. Natheless, no urgent call  
    Of one and all  
Could pass where Hera sat, her white arms folding  
    Sullen, in Zeus's hall,  
To her who hath the binding and the holding  
Of birth, to Eilithyia, god's and man's  
Great midwife—her, by Hera's jealous plans  
    Held in a golden cloud. .  
    No cry, howe'er so loud  
    Of Leto, torn and wild  
    To bear her faultless child,  
    Might pierce that magic wall.  
    So Hera sat, nor stirr'd;  
And Eilithyia drowsed nor ever heard.

## *The Homeric Hymn*

### x

Then did the goddesses hot counsel hold,  
And call on Iris, from the isle to wing  
Afoot, and swiftly Eilithyia fetch:

For guerdon promising  
A necklace all of amber strung on gold  
Nine cubits' stretch.

But strictly was she told  
To take the Midwife privily apart  
From Hera, and confide  
The whispered word aside:  
Lest Hera, hard of heart,  
Should, after all, her ministration thwart.

### xi

The which when Iris heard  
Wind-footed she, fleeter than any bird,  
On Heaven's floor  
Set her to run: and flew  
To where the immortal gods keep house above  
Olympus. Eilithyia forth she drew,  
Soft-tapping, to the door,  
And whisper'd her the word  
That might the Midwife's bowels of mercy move.  
'Yea,' said the Midwife: and they two  
Set course for Delos. Side by side they clove  
The air, shy dove breasting by sister-dove.

## *The Homeric Hymn*

### XII

So Eilithyia levell'd o'er the surf  
Her way to Delos: and the labouring throes  
    The longest, last,  
Took hold on Leto, and her arms she cast  
About a palm-tree, rocking to it close,  
Pressing her knees into the tender turf  
In agony to be eased. Wise Mother Earth  
Smiled flowers, and understood—till of a pang,  
    Sudden, forth sprang  
Phoebus Apollo to the light! and those,  
Beholding, raised the jubilant Song of Birth,  
Queen upon queen lifting her voice! Yea, then  
Queen upon queen did all with busy hands  
Let lift and bathe thee, baby-joy of men,  
In water pure, and swathe in swaddling bands,  
    White, delicate of fold,  
    And round thine infant girth  
    Let bind a belt of gold.

### XIII

Belted in gold, with sword of gold at hip,  
    The babe knew not his mother's teat:  
'Twas Themis handsell'd his immortal lip  
    With provend meet  
• Whereof the high immortals drink and eat.

## *The Homeric Hymn*

—While Leto languid, glad,  
Thought only, he was hers, this lusty archer-lad.

### xiv

But he, the Sun-God, did no sooner taste  
That food divine than every swaddling-band  
    Burst strand by strand,  
And burst the belt above his panting waist—  
    All hanging loose  
About him as he stood and gave command:  
‘Fetch me my lyre, fetch me my curving bow!  
    And, taught by these, shall know  
All men, through me, the unfaltering will of Zeus!’

### xv

So spake the unshorn God, the Archer bold,  
And turn'd to tread the ways of Earth so wide:  
While they, all they, had marvel to behold  
    How Delos broke in gold  
Beneath his feet, as on a mountain side  
Sudden, in Spring, a bush is glorified  
    And canopied with blossom manifold.  
—But he went swinging with a careless stride,  
    Proud, in his new artillery bedight,  
Up rocky Cythnus, and the isles desried—

### *The Homeric Hymn*

All his, and their inhabitants—for wide,  
Wide as he roam'd, ran they in rivalry  
To build him temples in a many groves.  
And these be his, and all the isles he loves,  
    And every foreland height,  
And every river hurrying to the sea.  
    But chief in thee,  
Delos, as first it was, is his delight.—

### XVI

Where the long-robed Ionians, each with mate  
And children, pious to his altar throng,  
    And, decent, celebrate  
His birth with boxing-match and dance and song:  
So that a stranger, happening them among,  
Would deem that these Ionians have no date,  
    Being ageless all so met:  
        And he should gaze  
        And marvel at their ways,  
    Health, wealth, the comely face  
On man and woman—envying their estate—  
    And yet  
*You* must be never able to forget.  
You maids of Delos, dear ones, as ye raise  
The hymn to Phoebus, Leto, Artemis,  
    In triune praise,

## *The Homeric Hymn*

Then slide your song back upon ancient days  
And men whose very name forgotten is,  
And women who have lived and gone their ways.  
And make them live again,  
Charming the tribes of men,  
Whose dialects with pretty mimicries  
Ye mock, so true  
They almost woo  
The stranger to believe he's singing too!

### xvii

Speed me, Apollo: speed me, Artemis!  
And you, my dears, farewell! Remember me  
Hereafter if from any land that is  
Some traveller question ye—  
'Maidens, who was the sweetest man of speech  
Fared hither, ever chanted on this beach?'  
I you beseech  
Make answer to him, civilly.—

### xviii

'Sir, he was just a blind man, and his home  
In rocky Chios. But his songs were best,  
And shall be ever in the days to come.'  
Say that: and as I quest  
In fair-wall'd cities far, I'll tell them there

*The Homeric Hymn*

(They'll list, for 'twill be true)  
Of Delos and of you.

But chief and evermore my song shall be  
Of Lord Apollo, Prince of archery,  
God of the Silver Bow, whom Leto bare—  
Leto, the lovely-tress'd.

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